

# Executive Summary

Today the Powder Springs Street corridor is a cross-section of Marietta's diversity and complexity. There are neighborhoods, each different in class and style. There are a wide variety of businesses and there are several prominent civic attractions. However, there is nothing specific to hold them together but a street. The street itself evolved from a simple farm-to-market route to a major urban arterial, and while its community was once vital, it is now in decline. From urban renewal in the 1960s, to spot zonings in the 1970s, and unintended consequences of land use changes in the last two decades, the corridor has faced challenges typical of many major arterials in suburban communities. It is now characterized by traffic congestion, economic disinvestments and visual blight, incompatible and unstable land uses – all symbols of neglect to those passing along its length.

The forces contributing to this decline are familiar and can be reversed. They are part of a cycle typical of corridors that develop according to traditional zoning rules, primarily with strip commercial uses and increasing attention to accommodating automobiles. Conflicts between through traffic and local traffic have compounded the corridor's problems as unincorporated areas have grown in auto-dependent patterns. Finally, as in many urban areas, socioeconomic shifts have resulted in new racial, ethnic, business and cultural dynamics.

Still, the Powder Springs Street corridor possesses many solid attributes, most of which are not found in typical suburban arterial corridors. It is anchored by downtown Marietta, a recognizable and desirable destination. It is served by transit. It hosts several historic features of note, as well as the City's impressive Conference Center with its Class A amenities and views of Lost and Kennesaw mountains. The corridor includes a traditional mix of uses similar to those important to community vitality: residential, retail, office, and institutional. The area offers a wide range of housing options.



Signs of Decline: Vacant Storefronts



Community Asset: Marietta Conference Center



Additionally, City officials have launched a number of initiatives that promise needed leader-ship for change. These include commitments to implement the recently completed Envision Marietta Downtown Master Plan, the Housing Authority's plans for redevelopment of Johnny Walker Homes, improvements along Atlanta Street, the new trail being developed to link the city and Kennesaw Mountain, preparation of downtown urban design guidelines and a sign ordinance and the City's commitment to apply smart growth principles to projects.

In short, great potential for redevelopment and long-term vitality is emerging from within the Powder Springs Street corridor. Given recent events and the slowing economy, the time for initiating proactive change in this sector of Marietta is urgent. A coordinated plan with targeted public and private reinvestment grounded in community participation can stem the decline and foster reinvestment for long-term stability that will benefit both the residents of the corridor as well as the entire City.



Powder Springs Street Community Workshop

But the City needs more than another plan. Our experience tells us that corridor stabilization and revitalization requires a new, broad-based community vision that is implemented and refined over years, not months. For this reason, this plan is based on the vision developed by the community itself in a community workshop. The community workshop initiated the long-term process of reclaiming this corridor as a "place" when it empowered the citizens and stakeholders in the Powder Springs Street corridor to frame the issues and identify the opportunities for themselves. Over 60 workshop participants took part in envisioning a corridor master plan that serves as the first phase of an on-going process that is destined to be a multi-phase, multi-year effort. This report refines the workshop documents into a blueprint and a step-by-step implementation process that will seek to revive the spirit and strength of this street and the neighborhoods, businesses, and the City it links.

The recommendations of this study are all connected by the theme of place-making. That is the process of making a place where people want to be - a place that has a sense of identity and community value – a sense of place. The Powder Springs Street corridor plan itself is prepared at two levels, or scales. First, there is a plan for the corridor as a whole, stretching from Whitlock Street south to Chestnut Hill Road. This plan identifies significant neighborhoods within the corridor and recommends how they can be strengthened and given a focal point for their identity. Second there is a more detailed Master Plan for Johnny Walker Homes and the adjacent parcels that shows how the city can capitalize on the opportunity to redevelop this site and create a new signature for renewal of the entire corridor.



The recommendations cover four basic elements for each of the two levels of the plan:

- 1. **Land Use** an illustrated plan showing where the principal opportunities are for redevelopment and the appropriate scale of development and relationships between land uses.
- 2. **Transportation** an assessment of the vital transportation connections that are needed to pull land uses together and add to the travel options, convenience, safety and mobility of people traveling to, from, and through the study area.
- 3. **Urban Design** a set of principles and examples of the design features that will make the corridor a more coherent and attractive visual statement, including the right massing and scale of existing and new buildings, the relationships of buildings to the street. Urban design also provides a plan for the public amenities of landscaping, open space, signs, and urban gateways that will identify the corridor as a "place" and make traveling along the street an interesting experience for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
- 4. **Economics** a factual analysis of the potential of the study area from the standpoint of the real estate markets retail, housing, and office markets that will be the strongest long-term players in the revitalization of the corridor.

These four elements are then presented in a summary of implementation strategies and tools. There are three basic sets of strategies available to make these steps possible. All are based on the principles of a public-private partnership that leverages public investments in the right proportion. First, make new capital investments – start with public improvements as catalysts to private investments. Second, revise and enhance city policies and regulations. Third, initiate sustainable partnerships and institutional responses. Project success is dependent on the coordinated use of all of these strategies.



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# Study Area Characteristics

# **HISTORY**

Cobb County is a vibrant "edge city" in the northwest part of Metropolitan Atlanta. Once a part of the Cherokee and Creek Nations, the State Legislature passed an act creating Cobb County in 1832. Today, it is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation.

The City of Marietta was founded in the 1830's and named after the wife of U.S. Representative, U.S. Senator, and Supreme Court Judge Thomas Willis Cobb, the namesake of Cobb County. In 1836 the State of Georgia began to purchase the right-of-way for the railroad built from the Tennessee River to the Chattahoochee. Small towns began to spring up along this line, one of which was Marietta. Most of downtown Marietta was destroyed by General Sherman during the Civil War, but it has subsequently been rebuilt in the same historic character.

With the invention of the trolley, the City of Marietta began to develop as a thriving suburb of Atlanta. More recently however, the City of Marietta has not been keeping pace with the substantial growth prevalent in other parts of Cobb County.

Cobb County has experienced substantial growth in the housing market over the past several years. The County has just over 68% owner occupied housing units and almost 32% rental units, with a vacancy rate of 4.2%. By contrast, the City of Marietta has had a much slower growth rate, and the rate of home ownership is extremely low. Currently the City as a whole is comprised of 54% renter-occupied housing units. In addition, there is a definite need for affordable housing in the City. The median household income is 30% less than that of Cobb County, which means that with home sales averaging over \$200,000, ownership is not attainable by most current Marietta residents.

# THE POWDER SPRINGS STREET CORRIDOR

The Powder Springs Street Corridor is situated along Powder Springs Street in Marietta, from Sandtown Road to North Marietta Parkway. Currently, this corridor serves as a thoroughfare to the historic Square in downtown Marietta. Powder Springs Street is lined with weak and/or low-end retailers. These shops are set back from the street with large parking lots in front and numerous curb cuts.

Land uses within the corridor range from heavy commercial, light industrial, retail, civic, to single and multi-family. The southern end of the corridor, along Powder Springs Street at Heathersett Drive and Chestnut Hill

Figure 1.1





Road is primarily commercial and contains several areas of underutilized land (see figure 1.2). Just north of the intersection of West Dixie Avenue and Powder Springs Street there is a tract

of underutilized office space. Further north in the corridor, underutilized sites include Cobb Family Resources and commercial properties fronting Powder Springs Street just north of Trammell Street and Whitlock Street. There are three parks in the area (Brown, Henry, and Hickory Hills), but they are not perceived as safe, and are therefore underutilized. One park is located across from Cobb Family Resources, while others exist just south of the cemetery. Housing in the corridor is primarily rental. This lack of ownership has led to an overall aesthetic decline of the neighborhoods in the area. Powder Springs Street has several major intersections which include Whitlock Avenue and the South Marietta Loop. Minor intersections include West Dixie Avenue and the Conference Center entrance. Due to the high volumes of traffic on Powder Springs Street, motorists have begun using the neighborhood streets as cut throughs. This has resulted in high-speed traffic on neighborhood streets which is an unsafe environment for pedestrians and cyclists.



Along Powder Springs Street there are no street trees or other aesthetic elements that might create more appeal in the corridor. The area has no bike paths and contains few sidewalks. The sidewalks that do exist are in a state of disrepair. The corridor also contains high volumes of traffic that result in congestion at peak times creating an unsafe environment for walkers and cyclists.

The heart of the corridor is the vacant Johnny Walker Homes redevelopment site. Land uses within this area include Cobb Family Resources, Wright Street Baptist church, single and multifamily housing, and a public park. The entire redevelopment area has almost 100 different

property owners, which makes combining the acres outside of the Johnny Walker homes site difficult. However, zoning does exist for almost every type of potential use within the district make it appealing to developers.

These assets include the convention center, confederate cemetery, and scattered successful retail. Powder Springs Street has the potential to be a gateway to the city of Marietta, but is currently just a thoroughfare to get to the square. It lacks an identity and a destination in and of itself. The purpose of this study is to help the residents and stakeholders of the Powder Springs Street Corridor to form and project a positive image of itself (a place) and use this to restore economic vitality to the corridor and its residents.





# Methodology & Process

From its inception the goal of this study has been to address the current issues this community is facing regarding land use, urban design, and transportation, and recommend solutions to make this an economically viable area. Like any transformation, success in this case depends upon the integration of multiple elements. The improvements that must be made within the area have to be undertaken simultaneously on multiple fronts - economic, design, community involvement, and transportation. Primarily, the corridor must be a place people want to be. People want to be in places that are attractive, safe, active, and, most importantly, serve some economic purpose. Creating a place that fulfills an economic purpose is what defines any place as a destination unto

itself. The Powder Springs Street corridor needs to be transformed into a true destination in order to successfully redevelop. Urban design, transportation, and economics are all critical components of the redevelopment of any area.

The communities that proactively adopt a new way of thinking about how to redevelop these areas will be the frontrunners over the next decade of communities that are economically successful and are known as special and inviting destinations around the country.

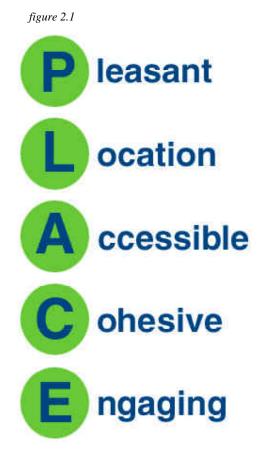
Knowing the past and understanding the present, JJG created a set of guiding principles to begin planning for the future of the Powder Springs Street corridor. To help the many corridor stakeholders focus on what type of a "PLACE" Powder Springs Street should be in the future, the following list of principles were established.

# **PLEASANT**

Is this a pleasurable area? A place should be enjoyable, memorable, and desirable. There should not be a significant amount of space within a place that is unpleasant to anybody -whether it be heavy traffic congestion, or a person at the bus stop, on the sidewalk, walking into an office building, eating lunch in the park, or looking out an apartment window to the street below.

# LOCATION

Is there a "there there?" All places have an identity, a distinction, a story to tell, a picture to take. Wonderful places are always describable whether it be the





architecture, the natural environment, or the uses in the area. To give this area a real identity, to make it a real place, deliberate attention must be paid to the details. Generally, people tolerate bad locations but embrace great locations.

#### ACCESSIBLE

Is it something that can be easily accessed? In other words, is it connected? Whether coming from outside of the area or from within the area, the entire place must be easy to use. Streets should serve as seams that bring the entire place together and not gashes that cut through the landscape.

# COHESIVE

Does it all tie together? Each part of a place must complement the other. A person must know without question when they are in the place and when they are not. Places act like a single body. When one part of the place gets "sick" the rest will soon follow. Similarly, when a place becomes healthy, the remainder of the place follows suit.

#### ENGAGING

Does it stimulate your senses? Places should offer their users stimulation. Through slow moving vehicular traffic, large amounts of sidewalk traffic, gently shifting trees, outdoor vending, sidewalk cafes, park water fountains, large storefront windows, or friends chatting on a park bench or a car parallel parking on the street are all elements of a place that when experienced first hand are highly engaging. This is an environment that draws people in.

# WORKSHOP: WHAT IS IT?

As a tool for working with the Marietta community to plan for a new "place," the JJG team chose to use the workshop model of community planning. Workshops, sometimes referred to as "charrettes", are one of the most productive community planning tools available today. They reap success because they bring citizens, public officials, planners, and designers together for a very intense time of problem solving. One of the greatest reasons for its success is that the workshop becomes a forum for community collaboration and education. The workshop process also provides an interactive learning process in which professional planners and designers can learn about the community and the community can learn more about their available choices in planning for the future.

# WORKSHOP: WHAT MAKES IT WORK?

It is vital to the success of the workshop that the planning team understands how to get the most out of the process. There are five key elements to the success of the workshop process that the JJG planning team closely adheres to.

figure 2.2





#### **PURPOSE**

Why are we here? The planning process must have a purpose, a reason for being. The goal of this study was to identify problems in the Powder Springs Street Corridor and then to provide implementable solutions for solving those problems.

figure 2.3



#### LISTEN

Before any problem can be fixed the problem must first be properly identified. As in any community, those who know the problems best are those who live in and use the area on a daily basis. Only by intently listening to the community can all issues be identified and understood.

#### ACKNOWLEDGE

Once the issues are heard, they must be recognized. A successful planning effort finds its foundation on trust - between planners, designers, citizens, government leaders, and all other parties. By acknowledging the issues and lending credence to the views, a community knows it has been heard and believes that it is understood.

#### CHOICES

Once problems are identified, it is the role of the planning facilitators to explore the available solutions. Planners select the best choice based on its merits. Some choices are not necessarily appropriate for every situation. The planning team's responsibility is to provide the appropriate choices and to decide which choice is best for each particular situation.

#### ENTHUSIASM

No matter what the principles are for creating "place" and causing change, real change will never occur without passion. Places affect every part of our lives, and therefore the business of placemaking is an exciting proposition. JJG's approach to placemaking in this study is to present effective and dynamic choices for community building and to do so in a manner which generates excitement and energy for the community.

#### WORKSHOP: A NEW VOCABULARY

The following terms and concepts were used throughout the workshop process as ways to communicate in this unique planning process.

- Stakeholders People who have a vested interest in the project because they will be directly affected by the outcome.
- Focus Group A small group of people whose input on an issue is used to determine the response that can be expected from a larger population.
- Break-Out Sessions Work sessions where a large group of people are broken up into smaller groups to work separately. Each group has the same goal, but typically they will develop different strategies to accomplish this goal. These break-out sessions are usually



followed by pin-ups to evaluate each plan.

- Pin-ups A work session in which each group literally pins their work to the wall (usually drawings or sketches) for others to review, discuss, and critique. This method fosters collaboration and helps determine weaknesses and strong points of multiple plans.
- *S***ketches** Draft plans drawn on trace paper on top of an aerial photograph of the study area. Sketches are used to help visualize the proposed changes.



# ISSUE IDENTIFICATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

# KICK-OFF MEETING (TUESDAY, JULY 9TH)

The kick-off meeting was held at the Marietta Conference Center in the heart of the Powder Springs Street corridor. The purpose of the meeting was introduce the study, frame the study in terms of a regional and national context, and facilitate partnerships in the redevelopment ahead. Bill Bruton, City Manager for the City of Marietta, welcomed the 68 attendees. Helen Tapp, with JJG, introduced the project. She was followed by Bob Gibbs, a nationally recognized retail consultant who discussed redevelopment trends from around the nation. Four JJG facilitators led the stakeholders in a discussion of the Gibbs presentation and captured opinions of its relevancy within the study area. After dinner, Constance Callahan, from SunTrust Bank, spoke about housing redevelopment within the Atlanta area. Lakey Broderius, with JJG, gathered stakeholder feedback from the presentation and discussed the importance of partnerships in the corridor's redevelopment.

#### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Several stakeholder interviews were conducted at the beginning of the study to gain insight about what were the main issues confronting this corridor, and possible solutions. The main concern is to stop and reverse the decline in this region. The area is considered aesthetically unappealing and there are several areas that are potential redevelopment sites, including Johnny Walker Homes. Numerous developers have expressed interest in the area, particularly the Johnny Walker Homes site and the adjacent property, including the Wright Street Baptist Church and Cobb Family Resources. There is concern among property owners surrounding the Johnny Walker Homes about the fate of their properties. In all the interviews, the Conference Center, golf course, location to the Square, and future Performing Arts Center were identified as assets.

figure 2.5

# WORKSHOP DAY I (WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>) Workshop Kick-off

Ellen Keys of JJG kicked off the three-day workshop with a presentation to a group of approximately 30 residents, employees, and stakeholders of the Powder Springs Street corridor. Ms. Keys introduced the workshop process and the study area, summarized the findings



from the stakeholder interviews, and presented the pros and cons of various urban design modes.

Patty Formosa, with Gibbs Planning Group, reported the preliminary findings of her market analysis of the study area. She discussed population and housing trends, as well her assessment of new retail, office and housing within the area. The presentations were followed by a lengthy question and answer session.

# WORKSHOP DAY 2 (THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH)

figure 2.6



Day 2 included a combination of work sessions, pin-ups, and focus groups. The work sessions consisted of two groups, one looking at the entire Powder Springs Street Corridor and another looking at just the Johnny Walker Homes site and environs. Three work sessions were held with the two groups discussing transportation, land use, and urban design. Each work session was concluded with a pin up, where both groups came together to review, discuss, and critique the conclusions of each group. Also on Day 2, two focus groups were held: one with business owners and interests within the corridor and one with residents of the corridor.

The work session looking at transportation enumerated many issues and opportunities within the corridor. The key points from the corridor group included:

- Address through-traffic
- A widened or new arterial would have many negative ef fects including harming existing residential areas, dividing the area, and making pedestrian and bicycle travel difficult.
- Circulation within neighborhoods needs to be improved
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities need to be enhanced
- New bicycle and pedestrian routes and connections need to be developed
- Traffic calming is needed on Powder Springs Street and many neighborhood streets Key points from the Johnny Walker Homes group included:
  - Need to improve sidewalks and add pedestrian connections
  - Recommended Henry Drive should become a through street ending at the park. The new drive should be the centerpiece to the redevelopment
  - New bicycle connections and paths are needed
  - Is Griggs Street necessary if Henry Drive is a through street
  - Need to consolidate curb cuts on Powder Springs Street

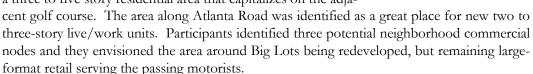
Market feasibility was the theme of the business focus group, which was held at the end of day one. Participants felt the area could definitely be improved, but all decisions needed to be



rationalized with feasibility studies including the one completed for this study (see Appendix A). Focus group participants cited the importance of leveraging the corridors existing assets, including the existing thriving businesses and skilled workers. Others mentioned the opportunity in the thousands of passing motorists. Convincing them to stop and spend money is a key to successful retail development, this includes keeping stores open during the later hours. Participants stated the importance of balancing new housing in terms of types and intensities. They also said incentives should be developed to encourage live/work units. Many of the employees within the area do not live there, so workforce housing would be beneficial. The

redevelopment of the Johnny Walker Homes site should be predominantly residential, participants said, but should include retail. It should not compete with the historic Square, which has a regional appeal, but focus on neighborhood services such as groceries, restaurants, and cleaners instead. They also recommended that the retail portion of the site not include a major anchor, but should be developed as a suite of smaller shops. Participants believed the redevelopment should include the parcels between the site and Powder Springs Street. Participants also discussed including the site where Cobb Family Resources presently sits as part of a land swap, allowing the center to move to another, more amenable location.

The second work session looked at land use issues within the corridor. Participants in the corridor work session identified minor changes within neighborhoods, and significant changes for the commercial areas along Powder Springs Street. Because of situational differences and size, Powder Springs Street was broken up into a series of discrete nodes, each with its own unique potential for redevelopment. Participants felt that the area around the Conference Center was optimal for a cluster of businesses related to the Center and proposed performing arts venue that included entertainment, restaurants, night life, event support businesses, and high-end retail. They felt the Wynnehaven apartments just to the south, were prime for redevelopment as a three to five story residential area that capitalizes on the adja-



The Johnny Walker Homes work session on land use envisioned dramatic changes as well. One of the most important conclusions reached was that density within the site must be biased towards Powder Springs Street. They recommended mixed-use buildings up to six stories high should front Powder Springs Street. The density should step down to having single-family homes adjacent to the existing single-family homes bordering the site. The retail component of the redevelopment should emphasize neighborhood services with a grocery store being the most coveted use. Other small retail and restaurants would fit with the scale of the redevelopment. There was a lot of discussion about the relationship between the redevelop-





ment and the Wright Street Baptist Church, Cobb Family Resources, and the neighborhood park. Ultimately, the Wright Street Baptist Church decided that staying in the neighborhood would be best for its congregation, even if that meant moving to another building in the area. Cobb Family Resources however, decided that this redevelopment would not be the best fit for their services and that it was in their best interest to find a larger site in another area of the City.

The third and final work session dealt with urban design issues in the corridor, particularly, what design standards should be established to maintain the character and style desired in this corridor. Both groups had similar ideas and goals during this work session. Primarily, they wanted to step down the scale from Powder Springs Street as you enter the neighborhoods. Other suggestions included leveraging the existing history by making the look of these new buildings match the historical ones. On street parking, street trees, and medians were suggested to help calm traffic. An extensive bike/trail system that traverses the corridor and utilizes the cemetery was very popular.

The second day of the workshop ended with the resident focus group. Several local residents were invited to this focus group. Overall residents felt that the corridor had many assets, such as regional access, the conference center, retail convenience, golf course, good schools and churches, and a small town, historic feel. The major complaint about this corridor was the traffic, including high speed traffic, congestion, cut through traffic, and deteriorating residential and commercial properties. Residents would like to see less crime, increased values, new development, landscaping, more law enforcement, and more owner occupied, single-family homes. Goods and services they feel they cannot get in the corridor include groceries, dry cleaning, family restaurants, employment centers, and a post office.

# WORKSHOP DAY 3 (FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH)

Day three of the workshop began with the developer's focus group. This focus group allowed local developers to view the plans that had been developed over the previous two days. Ellen Keys gave a short presentation about the plans and how they had evolved and then asked the developers to go to the drawing tables and review the plans. At this point several stakeholders began arriving for the final presentation and got to review the plans with the developers and discuss their unique viewpoints. The primary question asked of the developers was if the Johnny Walker Homes site was developable without the surrounding homes and church. There was also a strong concern that development of just the Johnny Walker Homes site would alienate the existing homes, Wright Street Baptist church, and Cobb Family Resources during construction.

The workshop concluded with a detailed presentation by Ellen Keys, Aaron Fortner, and Bill Dunkley in which they discussed the evolution of the plan throughout the three days, issues and concerns that arose, and overall recommendations.

# Issues & Opportunities

The key land use issues and opportunities identified by the public are discussed below and organized into four substantive areas: land use, transportation, urban design, and economic development.

# LAND USE

#### ISSUE: INCOMPATIBLE LAND USES

Many of the stated goals for the study area conflict with the existing land uses. Citizens repeatedly acknowledged their desire for Powder Springs Street to serve as a gateway into the city. This objective includes redevelopment of many parts of the Corridor along with aesthetic improvements. Citizens cited the incompatibility of heavy commercial, light industrial uses, and wholesale recycling establishments, such as the junkyard at the southern end of the study area.

# ISSUE: RENTAL UNITS

Many stakeholders and citizen participants took issue with the high incidence of renter-occupied housing units within the Corridor. The perception that the concentration of rental units magnified social problems and increased the incidence of code violations. Along with this issue, participants discussed the concomitant *opportunity*: increase ownership within the Corridor.

#### ISSUE: NEIGHBORHOOD DISREPAIR

Related to the previous issue is the issue of neighborhood disrepair. Renters typically care less about their dwelling units than owners do. Likewise, the owners of rental units often do not properly maintain their property. These are both factors contributing to neighborhood disrepair within the predominately rental neighborhoods in the Powder Springs Street study area. Other possible contributing factors include the geographic isolation of these neighborhoods. Each of the neglected neighborhoods is either spatially isolated by the street network, or isolated by major transportation routes such as the railroad or Powder Springs Street. Areas isolated by transportation routes have the associated problems of noise, pollution, and accessibility problems associated with congestion. Stakeholders viewed neighborhood reinvestment as paramount to the area's success.

# ISSUE: NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION

Many local residents from neighborhoods in and around the study area participated in the public involvement process. One of their primary concerns was for neighborhood conservation. They wanted proposed redevelopment and transportation improvements to improve and enhance their neighborhoods. From a land use perspective, they did not want to see changes that reduced the amount of park space, that fostered additional traffic, or that was out of context with the neighborhood.



#### OPPORTUNITY: MIXED-USE INFILL

Most participants agreed there is an exciting opportunity for multi-story, mixed-use infill along Powder Springs Street. The new buildings would incorporate some combination of retail, office, and residential space. Unfortunately, this type of development is not allowed in the current zoning ordinance. The area must either be rezoned to a new mixed-use ordinance or an overlay ordinance could be applied to areas targeted for mixed-use.

#### OPPORTUNITY: GOLF COURSE VIEWS

Many residents saw an opportunity for new residential developments adjacent to the golf course to take advantage of views overlooking the course.

# **TRANSPORTATION**

# ISSUE: THROUGH TRAFFIC

Participants and stakeholders alike stated that "through traffic" is one of the most pressing issues. Powder Springs Street is a very important component in the region's east-west connectivity. Thousands of Paulding County and west Cobb County residents rely on Powder Springs Street to get from their homes to destinations east of Marietta including I-75. Figure 3.1 below includes some of the critical traffic volumes within the study area. All of the numbers in the table are very high for a street of this type.

The high volumes of several roadways present large impacts on the study area. During peak periods, roads become very congested causing delays and frustration for local residents. The congestion causes drivers to choose to use neighborhood

figure 3.1

Location	Cars per peak hour per lane	Peak	
Through Movements			
Whitlock Ave, eastbound, just west of Powder Springs St	1,233	PM	
S Marietta Pkwy, southbound, just south of Whitlock Ave	1,624	PM	
Powder Springs St, northbound, just north of Sandtown Rd	3,162	AM	
Left Turning Movements			
Left turning movements from Powder Springs St southbound to S Marietta Pkwy eastbound	828	PM	
Left turning movements from S Marietta Pkwy westbound onto Powder Springs St southbound	693	PM	
Right Turning Movements			
Right turning movements from S Marietta Pkwy westbound onto Powder Springs St northbound	856	PM	
Right turning movements from Powder Springs St northbound to S. Marietta Pkwy eastbound	758	AM	

streets as short cuts. This "cut-though traffic" erodes the quality of life of local residents and introduces safety problems for children and pedestrians. The high traffic volumes through the study area serve as a major barrier for all modes of travel between neighborhoods and destinations.

Looked at together, the overall picture is one of morning peak traffic moving east on Whitlock Avenue, and then jogging south on Powder Springs Street to turn left onto South Marietta Parkway. This dog-legged route is joined by commuters heading north through the Corridor on Powder Springs Street, also heading for South Marietta Parkway. This scenario is reversed in the evening. The required turning movements, together with the combination of two significant streams of commuter traffic, serve to create a large degree of congestion throughout the Corridor.



figure 3.2

Intersection
Powder Springs Street & Whitlock Avenue
Powder Springs Street & South Marietta Parkway
Powder Springs Street & Gramling Street
Powder Springs Street & Sandtown Road

By observing turning movements and intersection counts, we can see that there are four very highly congested intersections (see figure 3.2).

The intersections of Powder Springs Street with both Gramling Street and Sandtown Road are oblique intersections – where the roadways do not cross at right angles. This configuration increases congestion at these two locations.

#### OPPORTUNITY: THROUGH TRAFFIC

While through traffic has a number of negative impacts, it does hold a positive opportunity. As the area redevelops, it has a built in market in the rush hour through traffic. Many stores and services could be developed around enticing the passers-by out of their cars.

# ISSUE: PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES

Residents are concerned that their streets are not as safe as they should be for pedestrians and bicyclists. Many of the streets are lined with dirt paths where sidewalks should be. Where sidewalks do exist, they are often in disrepair or frightfully close to high-speed traffic. This does not stop pedestrians from using the "facilities". Site visits found women with children and strollers trudging along the dirt paths and being forced to cross at dangerous intersections. And while sidewalks exist in some locations, there are no bicycle facilities anywhere in the study area. Travel by bicycle along any of the major streets is presently exceedingly dangerous.

# OPPORTUNITY: CONNECTIVITY

While connectivity in the study area is better than many suburban locales, stakeholders found numerous opportunities for improving connectivity for all modes of transportation. In general, where there are more options for getting to and from a destination, congestion is reduced by being diffused across the multiple routes. Pedestrian and bicycle connections provide safer alternatives to auto-oriented routes. And as pedestrian and bicycle trips are often both short and discretionary, improving the connected network of options increases the pool of destinations. While many areas are within a theoretical walking or biking distance of destinations like the Square, the cemetery, or Hickory Hills Park, the trips are made via an automobile because viable routes do not exist.

#### ISSUE: SAFETY

Figure 3.3 on the following page lists intersections which represent significant safety problems for both motorists and pedestrians.

# OPPORTUNITY: IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE

There is existing Cobb County Transit service along part of Powder Springs Street within the Corridor. There is a great opportunity to enhance this service by integrating bus stops into new developments, providing bus shelters and benches, and connecting bus stops to neighborhoods via a network of sidewalks.



figure 3.3

Intersection	Conditions	
Powder Springs Street & Whitlock Avenue	High traffic volumes	
	2. Multiple lanes on both cross streets	
	3. High number of turning movements, especially antagonistic left turns	
	4. Long Crosswalks that are misplaced – too far into the intersection	
Powder Springs Street & South Marietta Parkway	High traffic volumes	
	2. Multiple lanes on both cross streets	
	3. High number of turning movements, especially antagonistic left turns	
	4. Long Crosswalks	
	5. Large turning radii encourage speeding turns	
Powder Springs Street & Gramling Street	High traffic volumes on PSS	
drammig Succe	2. Large turning radii encourage speeding turns	
Powder Springs Street and Sandtown Road	High traffic volumes on PSS	
	2. High number of turning movements	
	3. Large turning radii encourage speeding turns	
	4. Oblique intersection	
Throughout the Corridor		
1 moughout the Comaor	Skewed crosswalks make crossing distances longer than necessary and position pedestrians at oblique angles to drivers' line-of-sight	

# URBAN DESIGN

# OPPORTUNITY: MEDIAN ON POWDER SPRINGS STREET

In addition to the transportation opportunities discussed above, there was broad consensus for a landscaped median dividing Powder Springs Street. This would be a principal element in transforming Powder Springs Street from a rather unattractive six-lane arterial into an enticing boulevard. In addition to providing aesthetic benefits, a median would also increase pedestrian safety and improve traffic flow and safety.

# OPPORTUNITY: STREET TREES

Adding street trees was another oft-cited opportunity that would, like a new median, increase the attractiveness of Powder Springs Street. On Powder Springs Street, trees are possible



within the median and along the edge of the street, between the sidewalk and the vehicle traffic. Most other streets within the study area could also benefit from street trees as well. And as with a median, the trees have transportation benefits. Streets lined with trees have a traffic calming effect by affording a sense of enclosure. They also buffer pedestrians from the traffic and give them much needed shade. Street trees present a terrific opportunity to beautify and unify the Corridor, as well as enhance the pedestrian experience.

# OPPORTUNITY: GATEWAYS

By all accounts, Powder Springs Street is a very important gateway into Marietta. Unfortunately, as it presently exists it is neither distinct nor inviting. As one drives north into the city there is no sense of arrival, no differentiation between the unincorporated county and the city. When mentioning the gateway opportunity within the Corridor, two different scales were mentioned: some form of physical symbol of entrance such as signage, pediments, or arches, and the overall character of Powder Springs Street between Chestnut Hill and Gramling including land uses, the streetscape environment, and architectural cohesiveness.

# OPPORTUNITY: POSSIBLE OVERLAY ZONE

Before the 3-day workshop began, there was a sense that there may be an opportunity for an overlay zoning district to codify the forthcoming vision for the Corridor. The details were yet to be fleshed out, but such a zone could address architectural and design standards for streets, medians, on-street parking, sidewalks, street trees, and landscaping, streetlights, signs, building facades, setbacks, heights, building massing, and fenestration.

# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### OPPORTUNITY: REGIONAL ASSETS

The study Corridor contains a suite of regional assets from which new economic activity could be leveraged. The conference center, golf course, hotel, confederate cemetery, proposed arts center, proximity to the Marietta Square, and thousands of persons in through traffic are all assets having numerous opportunities for spin off businesses or industry clustering.

# OPPORTUNITY: UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES

Numerous underutilized properties were identified as potential redevelopment opportunities. These include vacant, abandoned, or derelict properties. It also includes properties whose present use is not compatible with the adjacent or envisioned uses.

#### OPPORTUNITY: JOHNNY WALKER HOMES SITE

No site is as ripe for redevelopment as the Johnny Walker Homes site located in the heart of the study area. The site was formerly a public housing project that was recently vacated. The Marietta Housing Authority owns the property and is pursuing its redevelopment in conjunction with this report and the design workshop process.



#### ISSUE: DISPLACEMENT AND GENTRIFICATION

Naturally, where reinvestment and redevelopment are discussed come trepidation about displacement and gentrification. The most involved citizens were concerned with the impact of the redevelopment of Johnny Walker Homes on the Wright Street Baptist Church. Participants voiced similar concerns for the residents of the West Dixie neighborhood in light of proposals to turn their neighborhood into a "Mixed-Use Activity Center" and to realign Dixie Avenue with the entrance to the Conference Center. While still other participants were concerned with the impacts of redevelopment on the residents living on Griggs Street, McDonald Court, and Henry Drive south of the Johnny Walker Homes site.

# ISSUE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Participants expressed a need to incorporate affordable housing into new developments to prevent the displacement of gentrification. Incorporating affordable housing, especially at the Johnny Walker Homes site, would allow existing residents to remain in their neighborhoods while still allowing for neighborhood improvement.

# ISSUE: COBB FAMILY RESOURCES

Cobb Family Resources is seeking to expand their facilities. At issue was whether or not they purchase adjacent properties, furthering the fears of displacement, or relocate to a new site. Of particular concern, was their desire to usurp part of the neighborhood park for their expansion plans.

# Recommendations

# CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

#### LAND USE

The future land use plan exhibited in Figure 4.1 displays the final concept created during the design Workshop for the entire study area. The workshop's land use recommendations are described in the following three sections: residential neighborhoods, commercial development, and open space network.

# Residential Neighborhoods

Wright Street Neighborhood

This neighborhood is, and is envisioned to remain, a predominantly single-family neighborhood. Single-family infill and redevelopment is possible on many lots within the neighborhood. The notable exception here is with the redevelopment of the Johnny Walker Homes site, a signature component of this plan. This redevelopment is addressed in detail later in this section. The site is intended to be redeveloped with two to three story residential units within the site with midrise residential and commercial space fronting Powder Springs Street. The plan also calls for a linear park traversing the development.

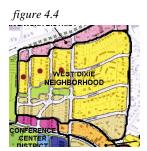


#### West Dixie Neighborhood

The West Dixie area is predominately composed of single-family bungalows. As many of these housing units are in disrepair, the workshop recommends enforcing existing codes and pursuing rehabilitation strategies to improve the housing stock within the neighborhood. This can be done through selective purchase and rehabilitation, grants and loans for owner rehabilitation,

and other means. Increasing owner-occupancy is a principal goal for this neighborhood. Improving the housing stock in the neighborhood and providing quality retail goods and services in the district will be the primary tools for increasing owner-occupancy in this neighborhood and throughout the district.

As indicated in Figure 4.1, stakeholders believe the portion of the neighborhood east of the Gramling Street Park should remain single-family while the portion to the west should be redeveloped as medium-density residential. The portion of the neighborhood fronting Powder Springs Street should be redeveloped as mixed-use buildings with some combination of retail, commercial, office or residential space. These new buildings are well-situated to leverage the activities within the conference center, and proposed arts facility. At the western edge of the neighborhood, fronting the railroad tracks, the





live/work units.

# Wynnehaven Neighborhood

The apartments in this neighborhood are ripe for redevelopment. The workshop called for higher-end, medium-density residential units, developed as a combination of town houses and three to four story condominium buildings. By taking advantage of scenic golf course views, the new units could recover the cost of demolishing the existing structures. Easy access to the golf course, the future performing arts center and amenities associated with the conference center should prove attractive to retirees seeking a low-maintenance, amenity-rich environment.

# Towerridge/Heathersett Neighborhood

The apartment and condominium neighborhood is also poised for redevelopment within the next decade. Workshop participants felt this area could support more moderately priced units as compared to the Northern Apartment Neighborhood. Participants felt two to three story owner-occupied townhouses made the most sense. Parts of the area could capitalize on views of the golf course and the park.

# COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Neighborhood Commercial

# **Gramling Street Gateway Center**

# Sandtown Road Commercial Center

# Reynolds Street Neighborhood Commercial Area

Workshop participants identified three potential locations for neighborhood commercial development. These areas are residential-serving and should be designed to provide access for frequently needed local goods and services. Examples include convenience stores, cleaners, restaurants, bars and pubs, and hair salons. Neighborhood commercial is typically one or two-story structures, and is developed in such a way as to be easily accessible on foot as well as by automobile.

The three locations, identified in Figure 4.2, are at the intersections of Powder Springs Street with Gramling Street (Gramling Street Gateway Center), on Powder Springs Street at Sandtown Road (Sandtown Road Commercial Center) and on Powder Springs Street near Reynolds Street (Reynolds Street Neighborhood Commercial Area). The latter site is part of the Johnny Walker Homes Redevelopment Site, and is addressed in detail in that section of the report. While the Gramling Street Gateway Center should locate smaller, neighborhood commercial-oriented uses at the intersection of Powder Springs Street and West Gramling Streets, this area can also contain larger-format retail uses in the area between West Gramling Street and Garrison Road.

Based on the study area market analysis in Appendix A, these areas should be able to support the following amounts of commercial uses:

figure 4.5



figure 4.6



figure 4.7



figure 4.8



figure 4.9



insert image 4.1 here

insert image 4.2 here



plan calls for a long-term transformation from the existing office/institutional uses to three to four story Figure 4.10

Subarea	Commercial Square Footage	Examples
Gramling Street Gateway Center	124,000 square feet	junior department store, apparel, restaurants, foods, home furnishings, dry cleaning/laundry, video
Sandtown Road Commercial Center	83,000 square feet	apparel, foods, appliances, personal services, sporting goods, service retail
Reynolds Street Neighborhood Commercial Area	40,500 square feet	hardware, computers, convenience, office supply

Please see Appendix A for a more detailed breakdown of supportable commercial activity by center and type.

figure 4.11



figure 4.12



Mixed Use

Square Gateway Area

Conference Center District

Johnny Walker Homes Redevelopment Site

Workshop participants identified several locations for new mixed-use buildings within the corridor. The largest concentration was directed at the northern edge of the study area, in the area between the Powder Springs Street corridor and the Marietta Square (Square Gateway Area). The collection of parcels is centered around the intersection of Waverly Way and Powder Springs Street. Stakeholders felt it was natural to increase the intensity of development as one approaches the Square, which is surrounded by multi-story buildings. This location is also an important gateway to the corridor, being passed by thousands of motorists on a daily basis.

Another important location targeted for mixed-use buildings is on Powder Springs Street at the Conference Center (Conference Center District). This location is ideally suited to attract tenants that complement the activities within the conference center and proposed



arts facility, and could support specialty retail and entertainment space. The new buildings would be an important gateway for the conference center facilities, especially if developed in conjunction with the realignment of West Dixie Avenue. Based upon market analysis (Appendix A), the Conference Center District should be able to support approximately 21,000 square feet of entertainment and retail space. Due to the existence of expansion plans for the Conference Center which would add space in the front of the center, the map only shows this district as existing on the east side of Powder Springs Street. However, it is important to consider that such a district would have a larger impact and larger presence on Powder Springs Street if it were to span both sides of the thoroughfare. In addition, it would have a greater impact on slowing traffic through district at this critical juncture. If the Conference Center expansion plans will allow, development should be considered for both sides of Powder Springs Street.

A portion of the Johnny Walker Homes site is proposed for mixed use buildings as well and is discussed later in this section. All of these mixed-use buildings would be between three and four stories with retail or commercial on the ground floor and residential above. To attract this type of building, it is important to provide incentives, possibly through an overlay zoning ordinance.

Commercial/Office

# Lower Powder Springs Street

Participants selected the southern portion of Powder Springs Street within the study area as the most viable location for commercial activity that requires a larger "footprint" or land area. With some of the highest traffic volumes within the corridor, this street segment is well-suited to capture commuter dollars by offering commercial establishments for the entire region. It is also a potential location for larger-format office space. The commercial space here would likely be single story and would line both sides of Powder Springs Street. A prime redevelopment site within this area is the junkyard located at the corner of Chestnut Hill Road and Powder Springs Street.

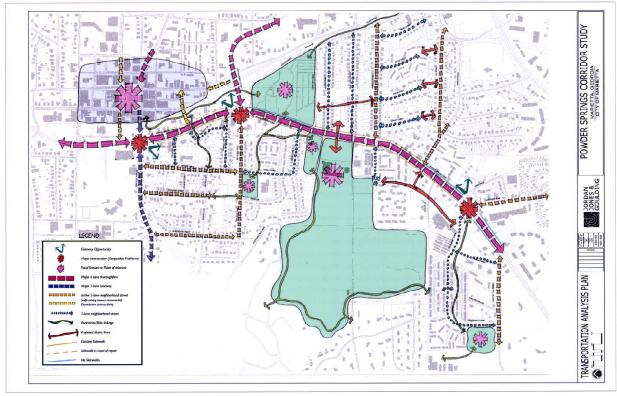
# OPEN SPACE NETWORK

An open space network was among the most popular ideas to come out of the workshop. This network would consist of existing/enhanced greenspaces and parks, enlarged greenspaces, and new greenspaces and parks. The idea of connecting existing and new greenspace together through a collection of new trails and linear parks would have many advantages. It would:

- Improve the quality of life for existing residents
- Increase the desirability of area neighborhoods
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility
- Increase the accessibility of some existing recreation spaces
- Enhance the experience of Conference Center visitors
- Preserve the natural resource value of the land
- Attract a new group of visitors seeking high quality recreation



figure 4.13



There are already many open space elements within the corridor. The transportation master plan, Figure 4.13, also illustrates the open space network. The green areas represent the existing components while the green arrows represent new pedestrian/bicycle linkages that form the network.

# Regional Components

- Conference Center golf course
- Confederate cemetery

# District Components

- Hickory Hills Park
- Brown Park

# Neighborhood Components

- Henry Memorial Park
- West Dixie/Gramling Street Parks
- Extension of Hickory Hills Park The fingerlet extension of Hickory Hills Park is one exciting aspect of a redevelopment of the Southern Apartment Neighborhood. The new pocket park would be lined with a narrow public street with sidewalks and landscaping. The street, in turn, would have townhouses fronting onto it. This would



allow a large number of townhouses, which generally have little to no yard, to share a common greenspace, thereby enhancing property values and sense of community as well as providing access to Hickory Hills Park.

Pocket Park in redeveloped Johnny Walker Homes site – This component is addressed later in this chapter.

#### GREENWAYS

The greenways unify and connect most of the above elements, transforming a collection of parks into an open space network.

- North from Brown Park along the railroad tracks connecting the Marietta Square with the Confederate Cemetery. This connection would connect the West Dixie neighborhood to the new mixed-use area as well as the Square.
- Around the periphery of the golf course connecting the Southern Apartment Neighborhood to the Conference Center and Powder Springs Street. This connection would allow residents access to the planned mixed-use development there. Walkers and bicyclists could cross the street and head north on the new greenway to connect to the Square.

# TRANSPORTATION

Circulation and Connectivity

East-West Connectivity

One of the biggest issues within the corridor is what to do with the large peak volume of east-west traffic and its congestion. Huge volumes of rush hour commuters from west Cobb and Paulding Counties pass through the study area. There was nearly unanimous consensus that something must be done to alleviate this problem. The increases in local connectivity will provide some relief, but will not solve the problem. An upcoming study authorized by the City Council will investigate the impact of a variety of alternatives. It seems clear that a major east-west connection needs to be either created or enhanced. The workshop team recommends that it either be located south of Chestnut Hill Road or north of Whitlock Street. It is important to note that the study area is primarily residential in nature and is already overburdened by high traffic volumes. Any new arterial through this area will continue to add detrimental barriers to the district and undermine the goals of this study.

# Powder Springs Street

Powder Springs Street is the key to connecting all of the elements in this plan. Due to the linear nature of the district, and the fact that there is no other direct route that connects all of the district's neighborhoods, commercial centers, and civic uses together, Powder Springs Street must conveniently support all modes of transportation: automobiles, pedestrians, bicycles, and transit. There was widespread agreement among participants that Powder Springs Street must be redesigned to accommodate all modes of travel. Its transformation is critical to the success of the corridor.

Participants called for wide, safe sidewalks buffered from the automobile traffic, designated bicycle lanes and enhancements to the transit that serves the corridor. Bicycle lanes should exist



on Powder Springs Street for the full length of the corridor, from Chestnut Hill Road in the south to Waverly Way in the north. Bus ridership is central to both traffic congestion and air quality problems in the region. Bus riders should be provided with a safe, comfortable, and sheltered place to wait for the bus and not be forced to stand on unpaved areas, inches from high-speed traffic.

Participants also identified that a 10-foot raised, landscaped median installed the length of Powder Springs Street would not only help to calm traffic along the corridor, but would greatly enhance the ability of pedestrians to cross this busy street safely and comfortably. A raised median should serve as a pedestrian refuge so that walkers could cross the street in two phases, rather than having to wait until traffic is clear in both directions at once. In places where a high degree of pedestrian crossing activity is anticipated, such as at Whitlock Avenue, Waverley Way, and South Marietta Parkway, crosswalks should be offset so that crossing pedestrians can use the space at the median effectively for "stacking." In some cases, low fencing at the median can be used to provide additional safety from automobile traffic.

# Neighborhood Connectivity

The Transportation plan illustrated in Figure 4.13 includes several new neighborhood connections and new streets. These new connections would increase residents' access to destinations, especially via non-motorized modes. More connections equate to shorter driving times, greater convenience and would moderately relieve traffic from the major arterials.

Several new north-south connections are possible in the West Dixie Neighborhood including three new connections to Hill Street. A new connection was also proposed between Gramling Street and Cemetery Street. These new connections would be unlikely to induce much cut-through traffic because they are primarily locally serving and do not create a better trip option for any through trips. Yet, they would provide residents with a much-improved network and greater route choices.

In the Greater Johnny Walker Homes area, a new street connection between McDonald and Reynolds Streets was discussed, but because it would likely induce additional cut-through traffic, is suggested to be a bicycle/pedestrian linkage.

Another new street was proposed to run between Fairgate Road at the southern end of the study area, parallel to Powder Springs Street to the Conference Center and for those accessing the commercial uses along Powder Springs Street. This new street would provide a critical north-south alternative to Powder Springs Street for those destined for the Conference Center. There is a topographical issue to address at the northern end of the Big Lots parking lot. This is not insurmountable, especially if the property is redeveloped.

A related proposal was to realign Dixie Street with the entrance to the Conference Center. The new alignment would then justify a badly needed traffic signal at the intersection of Dixie and the conference center drive. The realignment and light, in conjunction with the new north-south street in the neighborhood, would provide residents a badly-needed way to head south on Powder Springs Street during rush hour. Presently, turning left out of that neighborhood during rush hour is both dangerous and time consuming.



#### Access Management

Access management is an important component of the reformation of Powder Springs Street and is needed to address the large numbers of curb cuts. The abundance of curb cuts result in turning movements that interrupt the traffic flow on Powder Springs Street. Because adjacent parcels are not interconnected, one is forced to make two left-hand turns into Powder Springs Street for even short trips. The volumes and accessibility within the area leave one with the feeling that the area is not a cohesive corridor, but rather a hastily thrown together set of discrete businesses. A key step towards creating a destination is cohesiveness and ease of access and use.

To accomplish this new access standards should be developed for Powder Springs Street. Direct access onto Powder Springs Street by automobiles should be discouraged if possible. Instead, parcels should be accessed through common drives or alleys. Curb cuts should be consolidated and unnecessary curb cuts eliminated. Interparcel access should be required on all new developments. When developed in conjunction with a new median and streetscaping, access management will greatly increase the attractiveness, functionality and flow within Powder Springs Street.

# Traffic Calming

# Powder Springs Street

The high speeds of traffic on Powder Springs Street and extent of traffic on residential streets were both common concerns among workshop participants. Due to its high traffic volumes, Powder Springs Street is not a candidate for active traffic calming such as speed bumps, but there are an array of design techniques that can be used to slow drivers. Increasing the visual interest from tolerable to inviting will naturally slow drivers. Visual interest can be created through land use controls that require new buildings to be close to the street and incorporate traditional design standards including windows, operable front doors, sign control, massing and height limits. Street trees and a landscaped median work to narrow the "feel" of a street and control speeds as well. Visible, lighted crosswalks and high pedestrian volumes both naturally slow passing cars.

#### Residential Streets

The active two-lane streets within the neighborhoods are candidates for more active traffic calming devices such as speed humps, or chicanes. These are Hill Street, Gramling Street, Sandtown Road, Chestnut Hill Road, Reynolds Streets, Wright Street, and McDonald Street.

A second set of residential streets are candidates for a more passive set of calming measures. Workshop participants felt these streets had enough traffic to justify sidewalk bulb-outs at intersections and possibly on-street parking. These streets include Hedges Street, Dixie Avenue, Farelane Drive, Henderson Street, Trammell Street and Griggs Street.

# Transit

Currently, CCT serves the Powder Springs Street corridor with Bus Route #15 from the Square to beyond the southern boundary of the city, eventually linking up with Windy Hill Road. CCT service, however, avoids the northern section of the study area, taking an odd jog



over to Atlanta Road for two blocks before returning to Powder Springs Street. The workshop recommends this jog be eliminated. This would bring CCT service to the northern portion of the corridor, an area recommended as a mixed-use node. It would also improve trip times within the corridor.

As new neighborhood commercial nodes are developed, bus stops should be relocated to serve these areas. Key bus stop locations are shown on the Master Land Use Plan shown in Figure 4.1. Lighted crosswalks must be provided at all bus stop locations. Sheltered bus stops should be incorporated into the design of these new centers offering riders the opportunity to purchase a paper and coffee on the way to work and pick up laundry or incidental groceries on the way home.

Exactly half of all bus riders must cross the street upon alighting at a bus stop. Therefore, it is critical that crosswalks be added to allow bus riders to cross the street as close to bus stops as possible. In addition, 5-foot sidewalks should be provided on all streets that are within 1200 feet of a bus stop.

# Pedestrian Facilities and Multi-Use Paths

Improving the pedestrian network is vital to creating a lively corridor. Both new connections as well as enhancements to existing facilities are required. Because pedestrian trips are very sensitive to distance and the quality of facilities, the recommended improvements are essential to facilitating a truly pedestrian environment.

# Major Components

- Multi-use greenways: As mentioned in the land use section above, two new paths are recommended as part of a greenspace network. One would connect Brown Park to the Square, running along the railroad tracks. This path would be an integral part of the mixed-use Square Gateway area, and provide much-needed greenspace in that district. The other would connect the Towerridge/Heathersett Neighborhood with the Conference Center, running along the periphery of the golf course.
- Connections to Powder Springs Bike Lanes: Multi-use trails should have convenient connections to the more functional and transportation-oriented bike lanes on Powder Springs Street. Nodes where these connections should be made are shown on the master plan maps in this section, and include a connection at Sandtown Road (at the proposed new access road, serving the Towerridge/Heathersett Neighborhood), at Griggs Street (serving the southern portion of the Wright Street Neighborhood and the Johnny Walker Homes site), and at Brown Park/Reynolds Street (serving the Wright Street Neighborhood and connecting with the West Atlanta Street multiuse trail).
- Multi-use trail: A new multi-use trail connecting the Square to Smyrna has been proposed. The exact location is to be decided but it is expected to run near or along the railroad/Atlanta Road along the eastern boundary of the study area.
- Safe crossing: A safe east-west crossing is needed at the intersection of South Marietta Parkway and Powder Springs Street. This should be done in concert with pedestrian



improvements connecting Brown Park with the Johnny Walker Homes site. These two new safe crossings would greatly increase pedestrian safety and accessibility by linking three different components of the corridor.

- Cemetery connection: A proposed interpretive path through the Confederate Cemetery could be designed to connect Brown Park to the West Dixie Neighborhood.
- Cemetery sidewalk: a new sidewalk is desperately needed on Powder Springs Street next to the Confederate cemetery. Presently there is only a very narrow dirt path to serve a CCT stop and provide access from the West Dixie Neighborhood to points north. Admittedly, the right-of-way in this location is very tight. Either, Powder Springs Street needs to be realigned to create the necessary space for a safe sidewalk a project that could be accomplished with the introduction of a median or an ondemand pedestrian crossing and traffic signal needs to be provided at the intersection of Trammell Street and Powder Springs Street.

# Minor Components

- West Dixie and Gramling Street Parks: A new pathway could be constructed through these existing parks. This would be especially helpful for children going from street to street to keep them from having to go all the way to one end of the block.
- Fingerlet extension of Hickory Hills Park: This proposed extension would increase the accessibility of the park to the residents within this neighborhood.
- Johnny Walker Homes pocket park: A pocket park was incorporated as part of the redevelopment schematics for the Johnny Walker Homes site and is discussed later in this section.

# URBAN DESIGN DISTRICT FUNCTIONS AND LINKAGES

The Powder Springs Corridor is home to several district types – each of which will have a distinct character and function. Neighborhood centers, the Conference Center district, the Atlanta Street Live/Work District, and the Square Gateway will each project a different image that indicates its function within the master plan, and its relationship to the surrounding areas.

The two neighborhood centers will be located in the southern part of the study area at Powder Springs Street and Sandtown Road, and Powder Springs Street and Gramling. They should host smaller, neighborhood-oriented retail establishments that provide easy access for residents to frequently-needed goods and services. While their primary function is to serve the local residents (located within walking and biking distance, or a short car ride), they will also serve as visual gateways for the entire area. With wide sidewalks, street trees, and outward-facing retail, they will signal to drivers that they are entering a part of the corridor that reflects a human rather than automotive scale.

The Conference Center district will be located at Powder Springs Street at the entrance to the Conference Center. A realignment of West Dixie Avenue will provide a signalized intersection at the entrance. This district is not only home to smaller, neighborhood-oriented retail and service establishments, but also locates entertainment and specialty retail uses on all four corners of the new intersection. Somewhat more intensive commercial uses will serve both a



wider residential area and the Conference Center users themselves. Wide sidewalks, street trees, and the possibility of outdoor cafes and restaurants will make this district a focal point for the study area as well as a compelling entrance for the Conference Center. Building masses, particularly on the west side of Powder Springs Street, should be oriented to frame the grand Conference Center façade and invite the patron inwards.

The Atlanta Street Live/Work District is the only subarea that is not directly accessible from Powder Springs Street. It is located along Atlanta Street across from the railroad tracks, at the edge of the study area between the cemetery and Gramling Street. Residential buildings here are two-to-three stories tall and allow studios, workshops, or other work space on the ground floor. Wide sidewalks and street trees, as well as a 12' greenway/multi-use trail following the railroad up from Smyrna will serve to activate this community and add vitality.

The Square Gateway area is located at the edge of the study area as one approaches the Marietta Square along Powder Springs Street. It stretches along the west side of the rail line from South Marietta Parkway to Whitlock Avenue. Two-to-three story, zero-lot-line, residential buildings with ground floor retail and services will form a gateway to the Historic Marietta Square and will architecturally bridge the styles of the Square with the Powder Sprigs Street Corridor. Both Waverly Way and Whitlock Avenue will be the primary linkages through this district, connecting the Square to the Powder Springs Street corridor. A greenway/multi-use trail running along the buildings provides open space and creates the opportunity for a primary visual landmark.

The primary single-family residential districts in the study area should encourage redevelopment that responds to the street. Houses should have shallow setbacks, front porches, and garages in the rear or set back to the side. They should encourage neighborhood interaction and cohesiveness. Sidewalks should be built on all residential streets that have more than just a minimal amount of traffic.

#### CONCEPTUAL PLANS AND CROSS SECTIONS

The following describes the street sections for the major roadway types in the study area.





#### Powder Springs Street

Powder Springs Street from Chestnut Hill Road to Whitlock Avenue becomes a boulevard, signaling that the character of the district is changing from one that primarily moves cars, to one that serves as a distinct district (See Figure 4.14). The typical section includes a 10-foot landscaped median, four 11-foot through lanes, on-street bicycle lanes, and wide sidewalks horizontally separated from automobile traffic by planted "landscape zones." Reconfiguring Powder Springs Street will require a typical right-of-way of 101 feet. Existing right-of-way is adequate in the northern portion of the study area – north of South Marietta Parkway, but varies considerably throughout the southern portion of the corridor. Since Powder Springs Street will still have to accommodate a large volume of through traffic, it will have no direct on-street parking.

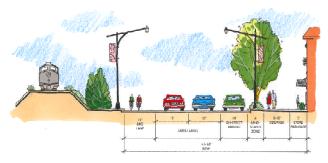


This configuration should serve to both move traffic while at the same time slow it down to a speed that is compatible with a vibrant district.

#### Atlanta Street

The Atlanta Street corridor will feature facilities for many modes of transportation, including automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, and rail (See Figure 4.15). The typical section will include two 12-foot travel lanes, on-street parking, a 12-foot bike trail adjacent to the existing rail line, and a wide sidewalk on the west side of the street. Live/work buildings should front the sidewalk.

figure 4.15

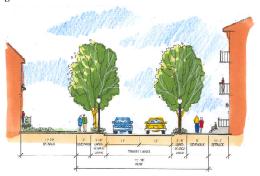


The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is currently planning to widen and relocate Atlanta Street. It is critical, therefore, to coordinate specific plans with GDOT as projects move through design and engineering phases.

figure 4.16

## Neighborhood Streets

The typical neighborhood street in the district, where no on-street parking is provided as a traffic calming measure, should provide two 11-foot travel lanes and 5-to-10-foot sidewalks, separated from automobile traffic by a landscaped strip (See Figure 4.16). This section can vary in sidewalk width, depending upon the intensity of the surrounding residential uses. Lower-density residential areas can be served adequately with 5-foot sidewalks, while higher-density multifamily districts should require wider sidewalks, as should the entrances to parks, playgrounds, schools, and other destinations located in residential districts. Wider travel lanes – up to 14-feet –



should be provided on streets that will need to accommodate bicycle access, such as Garrison, Gramling, West Dixie, and Reynolds.

# CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN - MARKET OVERVIEW

Demographic Characteristics	Total Trade Area	City of Marietta	Cobb County	Atlanta MSA	State of Georgia
Median Household Income	\$60,550	\$40 <b>,</b> 645	\$58,300	\$57,800	\$42,400
Households with Incomes Greater than \$50,000	60%	39%	59%	58%	43%
Household Size	2.33	2.39	2.64	2.59	2.65
Median Age	35.7	30	33.2	35	33.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000) and Claritas, Inc.



The primary trade area includes those communities for whom the Powder Springs Street Corridor represents their predominant shopping destination, including the City of Marietta and the eastern portion of Cobb County. The secondary trade area includes those communities that will frequent the area for their retail needs, but it will not necessarily be their primary retail destination; this includes Smyrna and Kennesaw. The total trade area consists of both the primary and secondary trade areas.

The trade area for the Powder Springs Street Corridor has a high median income, corresponding with the fact that more than half of the households had incomes of \$50,000 or greater in 2000. The household size is slighter lower than the averages found in the comparison area. This supports the median age being slightly higher in the study area since the average household size usually decreases as people age, and children move out on their own.

#### Market Development

Based on both a statistical review and solicitation of input from stakeholders in the area, it is easily identifiable that the study area's retail mix is not diverse enough at this point to be a true destination. The demographic characteristics of the trade area indicate that growth is supportable, particularly if diversifying the choices for consumers is targeted.

#### Retail Development Recommendations

Approximately 270,700 square feet of retail space is supportable within the study area. We recommend developing this area within three smaller retail developments spread throughout the Corridor, along with adding retail space in the redevelopment of Johnny Walking Homes and around the Conference Center.

- 1. Sandtown Road Commercial Center, a new neighborhood center near the intersection of Sandtown Road and Powder Springs Street
  - a. 83,000 square feet
  - b. quality sporting goods anchor and a good junior department store
- 2. Square Gateway Area, a new neighborhood center at the intersection of Gramling Street and Powder Springs Street
  - a. 124,500 square feet
  - b. should be the gateway into Marietta, and clearly identified with the Powder Springs Street Corridor
  - c. destination for residents and visitors
  - d. develop as pedestrian-friendly, including mixed-use structures and ample green space
- 3. Reynolds Street neighborhood commercial area, a small neighborhood market center between Reynolds Street and Whitlock Street
  - a. 40,500 square feet
  - b. most risky development, need for anchor tenant is strong
- 4. Johnny Walker Homes site commercial development
  - a. 2,200 square feet





- b. not prime location for retail since it lacks a view from Powder Springs Street
- c. focus should be small convenience retail, such as specialty foods, laundry/dry cleaning services or personal services
- 5. Conference Center District, a new commercial area fronting Powder Springs Street on the Conference Center property:
  - a. 20,500 square feet
  - b. provide marketable amenities in close proximity to conference center
  - c. accommodate concentration of entertainment and dining options
  - d. should be pedestrian-friendly and tied into the Gramling Street center

#### Residential Development Recommendations

Having a viable, 24-hour community requires a healthy residential component. Any successful mixed-use development is dependent on the presence of people, both as residents and shoppers. The visibility of people and the activity they create is what ensures a vibrant and prosperous area that people want to live in and visit. Also, the retail market in the study area will improve steadily over time if residential development occurs in the study area and buying power continues to increase over time.

Market research done by Gibbs Planning Group suggests that the residential market in the City of Marietta absorbs about 625 housing units per year in a variety of types – single-family, townhouses, and multi-family. However, price ranges for new homes are relatively steep for the median household income in the city.

There is a need for affordable, owner-occupied housing in Marietta. Any housing development within the study area needs to incorporate a variety of housing types and accommodate different income levels. Developments should be approached as mixed-income, meaning market rate and affordable housing should be indistinguishable from a visitor's perspective. We recommend at least 20%, and no more than 40%, of total housing stock be developed as affordable. The affordable units should be priced so that they can be purchased or rented by households earning no more than 80 percent of the median income. Where possible, affordable units should be in mixed income developments in which the design and appearance of the affordable units is identical to that of market rate units.

The redevelopment of the Johnny Walker Homes sites, and its surrounding area, (detailed later in this section) will act as a catalyst for further redevelopment along the Powder Springs Street Corridor. Pursuing other residential development is recommended in the Gramling area neighborhood and within the retail centers.

# Gramling Street neighborhood

Live-work and other quality residential units should be developed along South Atlanta Street. It is difficult to determine absorption rates since this would be a new product in the area, but a conservative estimate would be 25 to 50 units per year. Once live-work units are developed and existing housing stock is either renovated or converted to higher density housing, the area could support some additional neighborhood services.



#### Mixed-use centers

Residential units should be included in the mixed-use retail centers being developed. Residential units should be located above the ground floor retail shops. The residences should be two stories above the retail to capitalize on economies of scale. We recommend that the potential for residential development surrounding the retail centers, above and beyond the second and third stories above the retail, be re-evaluated in three to five years, since the market could drastically change with positive redevelopment within the Corridor.

## Office Development Recommendations

The metro Atlanta office market as a whole is saturated, including Marietta. This trend is expected to continue into the future, as rents continue to decline and vacancies increase.

Any office space developed in the study area should be included as part of a mixed-use style development. A viable office market can be created with ground floor retail and offices above, when the office square footage is equivalent to that of the retail space. Rents in these developments can be anticipated to achieve \$0.50 to \$1.00 higher than the surrounding suburban office parks. The average size of each space would be in the 1,500 to 5,000 square foot range.

If the concept of office space is pursued for development not included as part of a mixed-use development, we recommend no more than 50,000 square feet be built. Scattered office development will not support as much square footage and will achieve rents \$1.00 to \$2.00 below the surrounding office parks.

## STAKEHOLDERS' MARKET VIEWS

When stakeholders were asked what they wanted to see in the Powder Springs Street Corridor, the key to what most people view as the best chance for success is in defining the Corridor as different from going to a mall or strip center, which are readily found throughout metro Atlanta. The push for creating a place to "go" and "be" is what is really behind most resident's and business' desire for change in the area. It was very clearly stated that there is not a desire to directly compete with the Marietta Square; rather, the Corridor should be redeveloped with complementary uses.

People really liked the small town and historic feel of the area, and felt that the conference center was an underutilized asset. Leveraging the conference center as a destination by creating supportive developments around it could significantly increase the value and activity of the area. The congestion in the area is seen as a detractor for getting people to want to go to there. Convenience retail was the primary desire expressed by residents. Dry cleaners, family-friendly restaurants, and printing services were specifically mentioned.

Business owners within the study area expressed that change is welcome, but it will need to make economic sense for their bottom lines. The critical issue expressed includes making a destination that makes people want to stop at instead of just passing through the area on their way somewhere else.

There is a need for affordable housing, particularly types of developments that would give people the option to live and work in close proximity. People would like to have shorter commute times. Incentives for businesses to band together to participate in redevelopment



were suggested, since no single business can make a significant change on their own. Additionally, the need for the City to make a clear, targeted, permanent investment in the area is necessary to increase the confidence level of property owners to make investments in improving their own properties.

figure 4.20



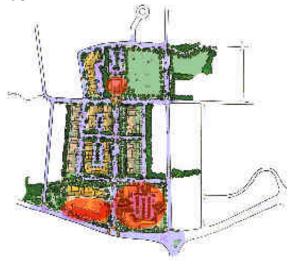
# JOHNNY WALKER HOMES MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

#### A NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Johnny Walker Homes was a prime example of an attempt to create a neighborhood gone awry. Upon this site sat 100 affordable housing units within a framework of unattractive and mundane buildings. The former housing development was monolithic in its uses with no open space; sidewalk environments or retail uses being successfully offered on the site. A true neighborhood center should not be comprised of monotonous buildings, connected by wide arterial streets, with limited and segregated land uses. Rather, a successful neighborhood center is a variety of land uses including parks, shops, and residents; human scale walkable blocks; interconnected, walkable streets; and usable public spaces. The neighborhood center should be a destination, a place where people can come for a variety of different activities that are closely spaced within walking distance of one another. The roads connecting these land uses should be pedestrian-friendly, and interconnected. A neighborhood

center shouldn't close when it gets dark, but rather, it should contain land uses that allow for a constant presence of people, such as restaurants, grocery stores and residences. The Johnny Walker Homes site now sits vacant, the canvass wiped clean with a new opportunity to create a working neighborhood center off of Powder Springs Street.

figure 4.21



#### LAND USE

The Johnny Walker Homes neighborhood center sits at the midpoint of the Powder Springs Street corridor and is adjacent to the Marietta Conference Center. New cafes, boutiques, strolable avenues, bustling parks and plazas and village style building forms all work together to give the neighborhood center an unmistakable identity as Marietta's thriving new neighborhood commercial node.

Beginning with the Powder Springs Street frontage, the neighborhood center will front the street with its largest uses. A grocery store, restaurants, office space and eventually upper floors of multifamily residential will front Powder Springs Street. The largest sized uses face this very busy street to take advantage of the large volumes of traffic moving throughout the corridor and by the site.



This also has the advantage of keeping larger sized uses out of the middle of the adjacent neighborhood.

West of Powder Springs Street, within the currently vacant properties of the former housing project, lies the true heart of the Neighborhood Center. Multi-leveled residential developments fill the site and orient themselves to the street infrastructure. The highest priced units front the new esplanade street that terminates to the east at the Cemetery and to the west at the newly relocated Wright Street Baptist Church facility at the park. Small neighborhood stores anchor intersection corners within the site, providing opportunities for small neighborhood cafes and shops, leaving the vast majority of the site to the new higher density residential development.

A healthy mix of uses in encouraged. It is this mixture that allows for a true neighborhood center that offers options to its inhabitants for living, working or shopping in a pedestrian environment. Non-residential uses must be mixed to include the larger uses for regional users along Powder Springs Street in addition to the smaller sized neighborhood uses within the site for neighborhood and local services for the adjacent and new neighborhood inhabitants. Residential uses must be mixed to bring a healthy balance of owner and renter types of units. Due to the large number of existing rental units in the area, it is encouraged that a large majority of these new units are owner occupied. In addition, the residential uses fronting Powder Springs Street must be smaller and a higher more urban density, leaving the heart of the site to larger units having lower density that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Equally important to the vitality of a neighborhood center are the civic and open space uses. This plan envisions a significant civic presence at

the terminus of the new grand esplanade street, with the existing Wright Street Baptist Church being relocated to the park to terminate the new grand street. This would replace the existing

Cobb Family Resource Center site. It is recommended that the Cobb Family Resource Center focus its current relocation search to find an area more in scale with its future plans. The existing site fits within the context of a strong neighborhood center.

#### Phasina

Marketing analysis date shows that 196,500 sq ft of commercial space and approximately 600 units of residential space can be accommodated within the entire corridor over the next 5 years. As the heart of the entire study area, this marketing potential must be focused and realized on the Johnny Walker Homes site and adjacent Powder Springs Street fronting properties. It is recommended that these square footages be accommodated in the following stages of development:

figure 4.22

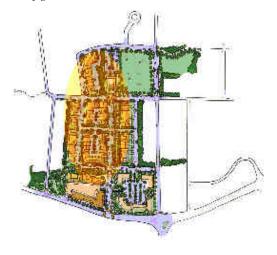


figure 4.23

figure 4.24





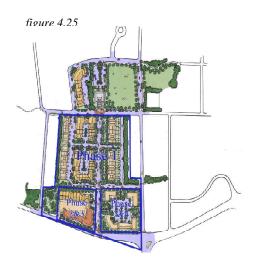


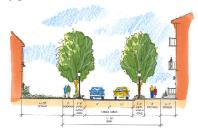




figure 4.27



figure 4.28



- Phase 1 Interior residential development on the site of the existing Johnny Walker Homes site: 125 units
- Phase 2 Powder Springs Street frontage properties: 196,500 sq ft
- Phase 3 Residential units built above the Powder Springs Street frontage development, south of the esplanade intersection: 250 units
- Phase 4 Residential units built above the Powder Springs Street frontage development, north of the esplanade intersection: 225 units

#### TRANSPORTATION

The network of roads for the neighborhood center is a multi-level concept, with each type of roadway serving specific purposes. The network consists of three street types: boulevard, esplanade and neighborhood. These streets carve the center into an easily accessible pattern of blocks, sidewalks and streets that can easily accommodate both vehicles and pedestrians. This infrastructure of lots, blocks and streets also makes for an environment that can accommodate the many different types of uses called for in the plan and in a way that is functional and developable over time.

#### Boulevard

Powder Springs Street is the main thoroughfare serving the corridor. This is the most heavily used street and it responds by having the highest intensity of lanes, sidewalks and buildings to reinforce its function. A landscaped median further contributes to its character as a boulevard and also gives the area an urban character. The adjacent sidewalks are wider than any other sidewalks in the area to allow pedestrians to feel safe and buffer them from the traffic along the street. The sidewalks width also accommodates the larger volumes of pedestrian traffic that will be associated with the more intense uses adjacent to the street, such as a grocery store, restaurants, and shops.

#### Esplanade

The focal point of the entire neighborhood center is to be the newly created esplanade that bisects the district west to east. The esplanade originates to the east at what is to be a focal point at the Cemetery and terminates on the western end at the foot of the newly relocated Wright Street Baptist Church. The esplanade is framed on both sides by multiple story residential buildings with balconies, windows, porches, stoops, entrances and sidewalks that directly face the space. On-street parking on both sides of the esplanade helps to slow down traffic and provides additional parking spaces for those who will drive to new district. The esplanade contains benches, wide sidewalks, street lights, landscaping and street furniture such as water fountains and public art, making the space but functional and beautiful.

Embellishing this space with a profoundly urban character is paramount in



the area's transformation to a desirable destination. The esplanade is the amenity that makes the transformation of the area feasible. By creating an esplanade, potential developers can market the site as a prime site for high-end residential units. The street also provides the additional connectivity needed through the site that allows for the vehicular and pedestrian connections to be made between Powder Springs Street and the neighborhood.

# Neighborhood Streets

The remaining streets within the redevelopment area are neighborhood streets. These streets



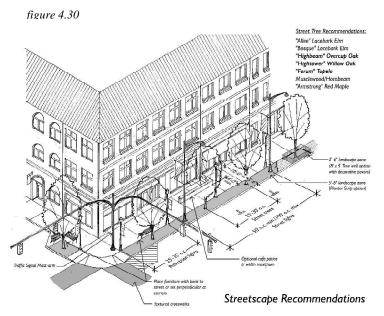


are slow moving with narrow travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees and sidewalks to serve as traffic calming mechanisms. These streets are already physically in place, however they will need improvements to accommodate the new design features. These improvements will include street trees and sidewalks along each neighborhood streets. The purpose of these improvements along the existing streets is to keep traffic calm throughout the neighborhood and to discourage through traffic from overwhelming the neighborhood.

#### URBAN DESIGN

The final ingredients to creating a sense of place for the new neighborhood center are the essential urban design elements. Distinctive urban design is what has long been missing from the previous Johnny Walker Homes site and that is what is essential for making the new district a success. The challenge here is to create an engaging, pedestrian friendly environment that will attract residents and shoppers to this area by offering a variety of activities. This is also an opportunity to make this area a place that stands out in the Atlanta landscape.

Place is created and felt when people can experience of connection with other people; when



they feel that the built structures around are appropriately sized and placed in relationship to what they as human beings can see and do around them. Such places create a sense of belonging and simply by their design say loudly, "this is a place that welcomes people."

The sense of place is very important to business districts because it attracts more shoppers, more businesses, more workers and more money. It raises property values and says the Urban Land Institute, it does away with the "throw-away suburb" syndrome.

The following set of guiding principles provided strong direction to the work that needed to be completed during the charrette.

Complementing the streetscapes of the new district are the pedestrian-oriented buildings forms. All buildings are oriented to the streets and sidewalks with parking and service facilities located to the side or rear of all of the buildings. Buildings are architecturally delin-

eated at each floor to provide an attractive aesthetic environment to the district with nice buildings and features. Commercial uses are at the street level and have clear and large shopping windows to attract pedestrians and promote walking. Street furniture on the sidewalks include benches, trash receptacles, street trees, banners, sandwich boards and bicycle racks to enliven the sidewalks. Entrances to all buildings are adjacent to the sidewalks and streets and are easily accessible to all pedestrians. Commercial tenants show their signage in attractive building mounted signs and canopies that contribute to the urban feeling of the new neighborhood center.



Detailed elements of the urban design plan include:

- Uniform traffic signal mast arms.
- Textured crosswalks.
- Street furniture including benches, waste receptacles and bicycle racks.
- Optional café patios for sidewalk dining.
- Pedestrian lights spaced equidistance and centered 25-35 feet apart.
- Street lights spaced equidistance and centered 50-100 feet apart.
- Landscaped strip adjacent to the curb 5-6 feet in width.
- Street trees including the following species: "Allee" Lacebark Elm, "Bosque" Lacebark Elm, "Highbeam" Overcup Oak, "Hightower" Willow Oak, "Forum" Tupelo Musclewood/Hornbeam, "Armstrong" Red Maple.

The urban design elements are the final piece that, when added to the land use and transportation elements, makes for a complete neighborhood center. The function and form of the district are all in agreement, and together create a workable and sustainable neighborhood center for existing and future residents.

# Zoning Strategy

The goals and vision of this plan must have a subsequent zoning companion to ensure they are implemented. The purpose of the zoning is to maximize the residential and commercial infrastructure, improve the appearance of the streets within the district, and allow for a compatible mixture of land uses in order to increase the efficiency of travel patterns as well as create a pedestrian-oriented environment in a mixed-use environment.

It should also be noted that the new regulations reflect a relatively new approach for guiding development. They incorporate responses to new market trends that favor more choices in a village environment, and a broadly inclusive process to create and implement this emerging vision. By giving development flexibility to property owners in conjunction with precise design requirements dealing with building aesthetics and form, sidewalks, parks and open space, parking and other related urban design elements, the new regulations must provide the precise tool for positive and strategic growth within the neighborhood center area.

The following are suggested zoning guidelines for achieving the desired built environment for the study area:

#### Development Controls

- Maximum Building Coverage No more than eighty-five percent (85%) of the site can be covered with impervious surfaces. The remaining fifteen percent (15%) shall be utilized for open space or public space.
- Minimum Open or Public Space. Required yards and requirements for sidewalk and supplemental zone widths which are constructed on private property may be counted towards this requirement. Such space may include planted areas, fountains, community gardens, parks, plazas, hardscape elements related to sidewalk and plazas, and similar features which are located on private property.



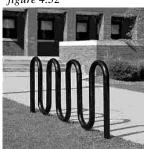
figure 4.31



- Maximum building heights: Structures or portions of structures which are within one hundred-fifty (150) feet of a single-family residentially zoned district boundary shall have a maximum height of thirty-five (35) feet. Structures that are greater than one hundred-fifty (150) feet of a single-family residentially zoned district boundary shall have a maximum height of fifty (50) feet. Mezzanines and lofts shall be considered a story.
- New development proposing to contain an entire block face greater than six hundred (600) feet in length shall be traversed by streets which create block faces no more than four hundred (400) feet in length. Such streets shall function as public streets and shall provide a connection two (2) other public streets.

#### Sidewalks

figure 4.32



- Public sidewalks shall be located along all public and private streets and shall have minimum widths as specified herein. No sidewalk shall be less than fifteen (15) feet in width. Sidewalks shall consist of two zones: a street furniture and tree planting zone and a clear zone.
- Street furniture and tree planting zone requirements: The street furniture and tree planting zone shall have a minimum width of five (5) feet. Said zone shall be located immediately adjacent to the curb and shall be continuous. In addition to the required planting of trees, this zone may also be used for the placement of street furniture including utility poles, waste receptacles, fire hydrants, traffic signs, newspaper vending boxes, bus shelters, bicycle racks and similar elements in a manner that does not obstruct pedestrian access or motorist visibility.
- Clear zone requirements: The clear zone shall be a minimum width of ten (10) feet. Said zone shall be located immediately contiguous to the street furniture and tree planting zone and shall be continuous. Said zone shall be hardscape, and shall be unobstructed for a minimum width of ten (10) feet and a minimum height of eight (8) feet except.

- Street tree planting requirements: Street trees are required and shall be planted in the ground a maximum of fifty feet (50) on center within the street furniture and tree planting zone and spaced equal distance between street lights. All newly planted trees shall be a minimum of two and one-half (2.5) inches in caliper measured thirty-six (36) inches above ground, shall be a minimum of ten (10) feet in height, shall have a minimum mature height of forty (40) feet, and shall be limbed up to a minimum height of five (5) feet. Trees shall have a minimum planting area of twenty-five (25) square feet.

- Tree grates: Tree grates are not required. Where tree grates are required or otherwise installed, they shall be a minimum of four (4) feet by eight (8) feet, and shall be placed within the street furniture and tree planting zone.
- Paving: All paving within the street furniture and tree planting zone shall utilize 6"x6" pavers.

figure 4.33





- No awning or canopy shall encroach more than five (5) feet over the required sidewalk clear zone.
- Where property without an intervening street within this district abuts properties with varying sidewalk requirements, the sidewalk area within twenty (20) feet of such properties shall taper as necessary to provide a smooth transition to the existing sidewalk requirement.
- Decorative pedestrian lights, where installed, shall be placed a maximum of fifty (50) feet on center and spaced equal distance between required trees along all streets. Where installed, said lights shall be located within either the street furniture and tree planting zone or the supplemental zone.
- All utilities except for street lights must be located underground.
- Trash receptacles, where installed, shall be placed within the street furniture and tree planting zone.

# Supplemental Zones

- Supplemental zones are the areas between any building and the nearest edge of the required sidewalk.
- When sidewalk level residential units are provided, supplemental zone shall be landscaped with the exception of terraces, porches, stoops and walkways, which may occupy a maximum of two-thirds (2/3) of the supplemental zone area.
- Terraces, porches and stoops shall have a maximum finished floor height of twenty-four (24) inches above finished-grade, unless existing to-

pographical considerations render this requirement unreasonable.

- The supplemental zone shall be no more than twenty-four (24) inches above the adjacent public sidewalk for a minimum linear distance of fifteen (15) feet from the nearest edge of the adjacent public sidewalk, unless existing topographical considerations render this requirement unreasonable.
- Any authorized walls surrounding landscaped and grassed areas shall not exceed a maximum height of twenty-four (24) inches, except retaining walls, which shall not exceed a maximum height of thirty-six (36) inches unless existing topography requires a retaining wall of greater height.

#### Relationship of Building to Street

For purposes of this chapter, sidewalk-level shall be defined as any floor of a building with a finished-floor elevation less than or equal to five (5) feet above the adjacent sidewalk or less than or equal to five (5) feet below the adjacent sidewalk.

figure 4.34

Location	Fixture type	Specification
Landscape strip, buildings	Benches	Victor Stanley Model #RB-28 in 6' length,
		Color: black
		Victor Stanley - The Bethesda Series
Landscape strip, buildings	Trash Receptacles	Model # S-424, Color: black
		DuMor Inc Leisure Lines
Landscape strip, buildings	Bicycle Racks	Model # 130-30, surface mount, Color: black



- Building floors shall be delineated at third story above sidewalk level and lower and shall be executed through windows, belt courses, cornice lines or similar architectural detailing.
- The primary pedestrian entrance for pedestrians to access all sidewalk level uses and business establishments with public street frontage shall face and be visible from the street, be directly accessible and visible from the sidewalk adjacent to such street and remain unlocked during business hours for non-residential uses.
- A street address number shall be located directly above the primary building entrance, shall be clearly visible from the sidewalk and shall be a minimum of six (6) inches in height.
- No barbed wire, razor wire, chain link fence or similar elements shall be visible from any public plaza, ground level or sidewalk level outdoor dining area or public rightof-way.
- Any drive-through windows, automatic teller machines, or gasoline pump canopies shall not be located between a building and the street.
- Loading and Building Mechanical areas: Dumpsters, loading areas and building mechanical and accessory features shall be screened so as not to be visible from any public plaza, ground level or sidewalk level outdoor dining area, public sidewalk or public right-of way. In addition, dumpsters and loading areas serving residential uses shall be enclosed with opaque walls six (6) feet in height.
- Pedestrian bridges and tunnels are prohibited when located above or below public streets, private streets which function as public streets connecting two (2) other public streets, or other public rights-of-way.

#### Curb Cuts and Parking Structures

- All sidewalk paving materials shall be continued across any intervening driveway.
- Driveway and curb cut widths shall be twenty-four (24) feet for two-way entrances and twelve (12) feet for one-way entrances.
- No circular drives shall be located between any building and any public street with the exception of hotels.
- Parking areas or driveways, except for a driveway to reach the side yard or rear yard or an on-site parking facility, are not permitted between the sidewalk and a building.
- No more than one (1) curb cut shall be permitted for each block face of a development, provided that properties with four (4) block faces or more may have three (3) curb cuts.
- Entrances to garages and carports that serve a single residential unit shall face the rear yard or side yard.
- All contiguous ground-floor residential units shall share one common drive, located in rear yards or side yards, to serve garages, carports and parking areas.



Parking deck facades shall conceal automobiles from visibility from any public rightof-way or private drive or street that are open to the general public, and shall have the
appearance of a horizontal storied building.

## Off-Street Parking Requirements

- Off-street surface parking shall be located to the side or rear of any principal structure.
- Minimum Bicycle Parking Requirements. All non-residential developments which provide automobile parking facilities shall provide bicycle/moped parking facilities at a ratio of at least one (1)\ bicycle/moped parking space for every twenty (20) automobile parking spaces. Multi-family developments shall provide said facilities at a ratio of at least one (1) bicycle/moped parking space for every five (5) multi-family units. No development, except a one or two-family development, shall have fewer than three (3) bicycle/moped parking spaces nor be required to exceed a maximum of fifty (50) spaces. Bicycle/moped spaces shall be located within the street furniture zone a maximum distance of one hundred (100) feet of the building entrance, or shall be located at least as close as the closest automobile space, except for handicapped parking spaces. Each space shall include a metal anchor sufficient to secure the bicycle/moped frame when used in conjunction with a user-supplied lock.
- All parking lots adjacent to any required sidewalk or supplemental zone shall have a landscaped strip a minimum of width of five (5) feet adjacent to said sidewalk or supplemental zone.

figure 4.35

Housing Type	Units /Acre	Max. # of Units	Comments
Rowhouses	30-40	80	Up to 3 floors; surface or garage parking; modest construction costs
Townhomes	25	25	Surface or garage parking; Low construction costs
Mid-Rise Multi-Family	60-80	300	Up to 6 floors; structured parking; modest construction costs (\$100 / sq.ft.)
TOTAL		405	



# JOHNNY WALKER HOMES MASTER PLAN - MARKET OVERVIEW

The successful redevelopment of the Powder Springs Street Corridor is largely dependent on the redevelopment efforts undertaken on the Johnny Walker Homes site. Based on market considerations, the redevelopment should be mostly residential, with retail uses developed for convenience.

# JOHNNY WALKER HOMES (JWH) SITE

The first place for housing development should be the Johnny Walker Homes property itself, with up to 405 units developed on the nine-acre site. (See Table below). While expensive, and in some ways risky, developing this site first will provide a showcase for the future develop-

figure	4.36
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Housing Type	Units/ Acre	Max # of Units	Comments
Single-Family Homes	10	20	Need 2-3 surface parking spaces per unit
Rowhouses/Townhomes	40	160	Up to 3 floors
Mid-Rise Multi-Family or Lofts	60-80	980	Up to 6 floors; moderate construction costs; surface or garage parking
TOTAL		1,160	

ment in the Powder Springs Street Corridor. The development should include ample green space, and should be accessible by surrounding neighborhoods to provide for true integration. This phase of residential construction should begin immediately and the goal should be to have it completed within three years. Absorption rates for this type of use are difficult to determine in areas to which they are a new idea for the market, but experiences with these types of dwellings show that the are typically highly successful if supported by the right kinds of complementary public and private actions.

# AREA SURROUNDING JWH SITE

While the construction is underway at the JWH site, the surrounding 26 acres should be assembled and construction should begin on further residential development. A maximum of 1,160 units are recommended to develop in this area. We recommend medium-density for this area; with a smooth transition made to the surrounding neighborhoods, made up of predominately single-family homes. This development may take five years or more to reach completion.

The commercial element of the JWH redevelopment should be small scale, approximately 2,200 square feet of retail space. Since this property is not viewable from Powder Springs Street itself, there is not a significant market for retailers. The focus should be on tenants to provide convenience retail, such as specialty foods, laundry/dry cleaners or personal services.



Since this is a high-value and mixed-use area, parking needs to be shared as nearly as possible, and locating some spaces in a parking structure should be considered. The zoning ordinance does not allow off- street parking to satisfy minimum parking requirements except in the Marietta CBD. However it allows shared parking for mixed use developments and provides density incentives for being near transit and providing interparcel access. Taken cumulatively, these incentives could reduce parking requirements from 2 units per acre to 1.8 units per acre at this location.

# Implementation

Marietta is facing a situation many communities have faced before, and many more will in the future. The first step is to create a good plan. Once the plan is complete, the next step is determining out how to make it happen. The following are the key recommendations for successful implementation.

- Carefully prioritize elements of the plan that will be noticed and will create buy-in immediately.
- Target public improvements, code enforcement, and development incentive efforts in a focused area and avoid the temptation to spread improvements around because this dilutes the 'critical mass' needed to accomplish real change.
- Prepare a first year action agenda of items to accomplish. At the close of the first year, prepare a first year status report of what's been done, and what needs to be done in Year Two.
- Establish benchmarks, tied to obtainable data and a clear timeline. In order for performance measurement to be successful and to produce benefit, regular and sustained measurement of progress toward specified outcomes has to happen.

The following are the step-by-step recommendations for specific actions to be taken to implement this plan. The action items below are grouped into five overall categories that correspond to the implementation process for successful community redevelopment:

- 1. Establish a phasing strategy.
- 2. Adopt public regulations with private incentives.
- 3. Identify funding for public improvements.
- 4. Build and maintain community capacity.

#### PHASING STRATEGY

Redevelopment along the Powder Springs Street Corridor will progress in phases. It would not be practical or economically feasible to expect the City of Marietta to construct all of the required infrastructure on "day one." Nor would it be practical to expect developers in the marketplace to be ready to add all of the anticipated land uses immediately. Rather, an approach that contemplates an initial public investment that would then spur an influx of private development capital would create the type of partnership necessary to implement the long-range plan.



# PUBLIC ROLE VS. PRIVATE ROLE

It is also neither fair nor necessary that the city have to be fiscally responsible for the capital improvements recommended in the area. As the viability and popularity of the Powder Springs Street Corridor grows, demand from developers to be in the area will increase. This increased demand should create a competitive atmosphere that will enable the city to ask the private sector to provide a greater share of the infrastructure burden.

Initially, however, it will be necessary for the city to assemble the public funding to provide first-phase improvements that accommodate the desired development and signify a change in the development patterns that will be obvious to anyone visiting the area. It will be important that this initial investment he torgeted to provide the most

Public Investment

Private Investment

Time

that this initial investment be targeted to provide the most impact possible.

The first phase will require relatively heavy, targeted public investment. It will need to be matched with regulatory incentives to leverage private investment successfully. Then, once market success is established and demonstrated, it will become gradually easer to gain private investor confidence and build market-driven momentum. Once that momentum is established the city can move its redevelopment capital to a new location and begin phase two. While Phase Two is underway, the balance of public and private initiative in Phase One will gradually shift to the private sector so that over the long-run there is a mutual sharing of the cost of improvements. Ultimately the increased tax base in the Corridor will repay the public investment and allow the city to continue to reinvest and redevelop successive phases of the project by recycling the public dollars. The long-run result should be a sustainable pattern of renewal through public-private partnerships.

The following section provides a step-by-step implementation plan divided into four phases. At the end is a detailed list of public improvements, their cost, lead agency, and funding suggestions.

#### PHASE ONE

# Objective: Initiate Johnny Walker Homes Master Plan and Powder Springs St Gateway.

To that end, we recommend that the first phase of public improvements be targeted to the Johnny Walker Homes site and the immediate surrounding area. This is the largest and most visible public decision that will serve as the catalyst for redevelopment because it will signal a completely new look and a new attitude for this part of the city. Replacing Johnny Walker Homes with a viable, upscale mixed-use, mixed-income development will eliminate one of the chief impediments to private reinvestment and create the ground for the positive image the area needs. The redevelopment might begin with the rowhouses and town houses first, allowing time to assemble the land fronting Powder Springs Street for the mid-rise condominiums, retail development, and parking deck that would be the most expensive and risky part of the



# development.

Concurrently with the Johnny Walker Homes site redevelopment, the city should be actively pursuing the first phase of reconstruction of Powder Springs Street, including the landscaped median and streetscape improvements. The first phase would run from Whitlock Avenue to West Dixie Avenue. This, along with the first portion of the Esplanade, framing the project entrance from Powder Springs Street, would establish the suitable gateway for approaching traffic signaling the transformation of the area.

figure 5.2

Action	Lead Responsibility	Time Frame	Funding
Prepare and Issue RFP for redeveloping JWH site (9 acres) and any adjacent land needed	Housing Authority	Yr. 1	Housing Authority
Prepare overlay zoning district for area incorporating design guidelines for JWH and Powder Springs St. and access management standards	City	Yr. 1	City
Redevelopment of 9 acre JWH site	Housing Authority	Yr. 2-4	Housing Authority/ Private
Implement TAD funding for corridor	City	Yr 1	City
Purchase properties along Powder Springs St. from Griggs St. to Reynolds St.	Housing Authority	Yr. 2	TAD
Reconstruction of Powder Springs St. with streetscape from Whitlock to West Dixie Ave.	GDOT/ City	Yr. 2-4	TAD/GDOT
Intersection improvements – Powder Springs St at Whitlock	GDOT/ City	Yr. 2-3	City /GDOT
Intersection improvements – Powder Springs St. at South Marietta Parkway/Reynolds St.	GDOT/ City	Yr. 2-3	City /GDOT



Steps would generally be as follows:

# PHASE TWO

# Objective: Complete Johnny Walker Homes Redevelopment Master Plan and Tie to Square.

In Phase Two, the Esplanade is completed. The relocation of Cobb Family Resources to a new location frees up land for the Wright Street Baptist Church to relocate. The Henry Memorial Park is refurbished and landscaped and additional housing constructed along the periphery of the site. The city constructs the greenway along Atlanta Street to connect the study area to the Square. The Reynolds Street Neighborhood Commercial Area begins to develop. The city implements traffic calming on the streets north of Reynolds Street and

figure 5.3

Action	Lead Responsibility	Time Frame	Funding
Complete Esplanade and streets in JWH area	City	Yr. 3-4	City/TAD
Extend Henry Drive to Reynolds Street	City	Yr. 3	TAD
Relocation of Cobb Family Resources	CFR	Yr. 3	TAD/Foundation
Relocation of Wright Street Baptist Church	City	Yr. 3	TAD/Private
Renovation of Henry Memorial Park	City	Yr. 4	TAD
Complete JWH redevelopment	Housing Authority	Yr 4	Housing Authority/Private
Construct greenway on Atlanta Street	City	Yr. 4	TEA21/TAD
E-W Pedestrian crossing- South Marietta Parkway and Powder Springs St. intersection	City	Yr. 5	TEA21/TAD
Greenway from Atlanta St. to Maxwell St.	City	Yr. 6	TEA21/TAD
Traffic calming on neighborhood streets	City	Yr. 6	TAD
Neighborhood housing rehabilitation	Cobb Housing, Inc.	Yr. 3-6	CDBG



more neighborhood rehabilitation occurs north of Reynolds Street.

Steps in this phase would generally be as follows:

# PHASE THREE

# Objective: Extend redevelopment focus to the Conference Center and into neighborhoods to the south.

In the third phase, the realignment of West Dixie Avenue connects the entrance of the Conference Center to Atlanta Street. The Powder Springs Street enhancements, streetscape, and median improvements extend to Garrison Road. Commercial and mixed-use development occurs at the Square Gateway Area at Gramling Road and new high-density residential development occurs behind it. Housing rehabilitation, infill, and redevelopment starts to spillover on adja-

figure 5.4

Action	Lead Responsibility	Time Frame	Funding
Re-align West Dixie Avenue to Conference Ctr. entrance	City	Yr. 6	TAD
Bulbouts and on-street parking on Hedges, Dixie, Griggs, Trammell, Henderson St.	City	Yr. 7	TAD
Pathways through W. Dixie and Gramling St. Parks and along City Cemetery edge	City	Yr. 7	TAD
Housing rehabilitation and home buyer loans	Cobb Housing, Inc.	Yr. 7-10	CDBG
Extend Powder Springs St. median and streetscaping to Garrison Road	City/ GDOT	Yr. 8-10	TEA21/TAD
Commercial development at Conference Center	City	Yr. 9	TAD/Private
Gateway and landscaping at Powder Springs St at Sandtown Road and Gramling Street	City	Yr. 10	TAD/ISTEA
Lovejoy, Bolan, and Little Street connections to Hill Street	City	Yr. 10	TAD
Extend multi-use trail along Atlanta Street from Pearl Street to Brown Park	City	Yr. 10	TEA21/TAD



cent property with CDBG rehabilitation grants and HOME assistance for qualified homeowners in West Dixie Street and Griggs Street. The Conference Center commercial district is developed. Live-work units are constructed along Atlanta Street from Cemetery Street to Hill Street.

Steps in this phase would generally be as follows:

# PHASE FOUR

Objective: Capture buying power by extending redevelopment to Chestnut Hill with a new anchor and high-density uses around the golf course.

Phase Four starts with the final stage of the Powder Springs Street improvements to Chestnut Hill Road. High value and higher density residential development occurs next to the conference

figure 5.5

Action	Lead Responsibility	Time Frame	Funding
Extend Powder Springs St. streetscape and median to Chestnut Hill Rd.	City/GDOT	Yr. 10-12	TAD/ISTEA
High density housing redevelopment on south side of golf course	City	Yr. 10-15	TAD/Private
Big Lots site is redeveloped	City	Yr. 12	TAD/Private
Construct greenways around golf course	City	Yr. 12	TAD/ISTEA
Sandtown Road Commercial Center develops	City	Yr. 12-15	TAD/Private
Construct new road from Fairgate Road to Gramling Road west of Powder Springs St.	City	Yr. 12-13	TAD
Extend Hickory Hills Park and Roadway	City	Yr. 15	TAD/Private
Office Park develops north of Chestnut Hill Rd.	City	Yr. 15-20	TAD/Private
Housing rehabilitation and homebuyer downpayment assistance	Cobb Housing, Inc.	Yr. 10-20	CDBG



center and golf course. The Sandtown Road Commercial Center is developed with a grocery or junior department store anchor. Big Lots is torn down and other commercial redevelopment occurs as aging and obsolete commercial sites along Powder Springs Street are redeveloped as neighborhood commercial, mixed use, high-density residential, and office development. Greenways surround the golf course and tie into the Hickory Hills Park.

Steps in this phase would generally be as follows:

Appendix B includes a table that provides more detailed information and cost estimates for the major public improvements.

# PUBLIC REGULATIONS/ PRIVATE INCENTIVES

The types of regulations and policies in place within any community provide a clear indication about priorities and direction. In some instances, Marietta is giving mixed signals between what the stated desires for development and redevelopment direction are for the community, and the types of developments permitted to be developed. It is important to adopt regulations and policies that encourage the types of developments the City wants now to make a clear position statement about the type of development they want in the future.

- Evaluate target areas for redevelopment throughout Marietta and adopt detailed redevelopment plans.
- Review current MXD and RHR zoning districts, and modify as needed to implement mixed-use development classifications including live-work as well as vertically mixed retail-residential combinations.
- Implement incentive-based density bonuses and performance standards in zoning regulations to give more flexibility in targeted redevelopment areas.
- Adopt overlay districts in the zoning ordinance that implement access management standards as well as the streetscape and architectural controls for the Corridor.
- Strengthen code enforcement to address violations of existing ordinances concerning litter, signage, screening of outdoor storage, under-maintained rental housing, and elimination of junkyards to improve the image and overall perception of Powder Springs Street Corridor.
- Create the Marietta Brownfield Initiative to evaluate and oversee the re-use of vacant and abandoned, contaminated sites.

# **FUNDING**

Funding is a fundamental component of any redevelopment effort. The real goal when considering funding any development or redevelopment project is to successfully leverage limited funds. Most often the public sector needs to make targeted investments in an area first, in order to spur further private development. Marietta will need to make infrastructure improvements, among taking other actions, within the Powder Springs Street Corridor to serve as a catalyst to attract private developers' interest.



- Pursue a variety of outside funding sources aside from the City itself, including historic preservation funding, federal housing assistance funding, formation of a Tax Allocation District (TAD), formation of a Community Improvement District (CID), CDBG funds, HOME funds, a variety of loan funds from DCA, and grant and foundation monies.
- Review the prioritization of the general funds for the City as to whether a dedication
  of some of those monies would be better leveraged in the implementation of the
  Powder Springs Street Corridor Master Plan.
- Leverage the funds used to increase the possibility of funding for other projects.
- Encourage the creation of local lending programs through both government and private sector support to create pride and stability in neighborhoods and provide incentives for business redevelopment.
- Explore potential to draw from the county SPLOST funds.
- Inventory and assess Marietta's cultural and historic resources in order to pursue state, federal, and private funds for their development and/or redevelopment.
- Pursue Local Development Fund monies from DCA that provides matching grants for community improvement activities.
- Apply for Redevelopment Fund assistance from DCA for redevelopment projects.
- Establish a Tax Allocation District (TAD), for underutilized, abandoned, or blighted property in the Powder Springs Street Corridor. TAD designation allows tax rate to be "frozen" at current status. All revenues collected above the frozen rate based on property improvements are allocated only for improvements within the district itself.
- Create a series of re-investment zones that allow homeowners' tax abatements to be applied to real property for improvements and rehabilitation of housing in the community.
- Seek funding from the "Housing Rehabilitation Program" (HUD) that will preserve
  the existing housing stock and provide safe, decent, and sanitary affordable housing
  for low and moderate-income homeowners through rehabilitation of substandard
  single-family homes.
- Institute Community Improvement District (CID) for Powder Springs Street Corridor. District designation is obtained when majority of property owners agree to tax themselves to provide dedicated revenue, usually used for infrastructure improvements and cleaning and maintenance services.

# COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

A community's competitiveness is an increasingly large part of economic development and successful plan implementation. It really depends on the capacity of a community to adjust to continual change and its leadership's ability to form partnerships. Implementation normally has to be approached through incremental phasing, involving as many groups as possible to adopt the elements of the plan they are interested in. This can create some coordination



headaches, but the payoff of increased buy-in and consensus, as well as moving forward towards the plan's goals, is worth it.

#### **PARTNERSHIPS**

Partnerships are vital to the success of any community development or redevelopment effort. The history of successful collaboration in Marietta is limited. Partnerships allow everyone to leverage the strengths and mitigate the weaknesses of each other. The culture of collaboration needs to become a permanent element in Marietta's civic infrastructure.

- Involve as many groups as is manageable in adoption of implementation steps for the final plan.
- Formalize organization of Powder Springs Street Corridor stakeholders, including citizens and business leaders that participated in the plan development process, as well as working to expand outreach efforts.
- Continue dialogue among identified stakeholders and City staff and local elected officials.
- Begin partnership development at the neighborhood level in order to coordinate individual grassroots efforts into a more cohesive strategy for redevelopment in Marietta. Partnering community and civic groups with similar interests can leverage their resources and create a coherent focused effort.
- Continue to hold community design charrettes for Powder Springs Street Corridor, as well as other areas targeted for redevelopment in Marietta, to facilitate public input, as well as providing a review process during design development.
- Strategically align with Southern Polytechnic University to leverage assets of student involvement, outreach, and economic impact.
- Encourage stronger role and leverage of powers of Downtown Development Authority.
- Create a Neighborhood Stabilization Team an association of city, neighborhood, and non-profit groups whose focus is to coordinate community activities for repairing and maintaining the current housing stock and to encourage new development in Marietta.
- Pursue more active support from the non-profits in the area, such as civic associations, neighborhood associations, business associations, and historic preservation groups.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY FOR REDEVELOPMENT

There is a gap in coordination and promotion efforts for redevelopment in Marietta. Marietta has had difficulty implementing redevelopment plans in the past. One of the reasons may be that there is not a single, strong organization in charge. Much of the redevelopment that needs to happen to Marietta forward is most readily achieved when a "champion" is assigned to the task.



- Inventory all organizations involved in redevelopment and economic development efforts locally. Carry out an in-depth analysis such as the one begun by the Redevelopment Task Force to evaluate the current system and to assign or re-assign responsibilities accordingly.
- Explore a model for non-profit agencies to carry out redevelopment and Continue coordination of key stakeholder groups involved in this project, with the redevelopment agency taking a key lead in the process.
- Agency should have link to City website to disseminate information about redevelopment projects, new investments, and infrastructure improvements for citizens and any developer inquiries.
- Establish a redevelopment committee/panel that includes key representatives from the private, public, and non-profit sectors in order to encourage market-based, local initiatives for local redevelopment. The committee/panel would provide oversight to review pending projects and future projects in accordance with the Powder Springs Street Master Plan and Marietta's comprehensive plan.
- Assemble properties to encourage developer interest and investment for redevelopment.

#### PROMOTION

In order to realize the capacity to implement, it will be imperative to get the positive message out about Marietta. This communication is important for both internal and external constituencies. There are many examples of little known "jewels" within the community, or pockets of redevelopment, that have gotten a successful start. Many times, highlighting the current successes spurs interest and helps to build momentum for future redevelopment successes.

- Hold a series of workshops showcasing plans and improvements schedules for areas targeted for redevelopment, with the first on Powder Springs Street Corridor, for realtors and local developers.
- Host a Redevelopment Summit for community leaders, particularly those that attended the project kick-off meeting. Report progress and provide status updates on what is happening on the Powder Springs Street Corridor, and any other ongoing redevelopment efforts in the City. Include at least one representative from an outside organization as a speaker to bring their experience and lessons learned to the forum.
- Expand Neighborhood Watch efforts to encompass both residential and commercial properties in the Powder Springs Street Corridor. Coordinate patrols within the Corridor during off-hours to deter vandalism, theft and burglary.
- Host a "Day of Dialogue" on community development, leadership, and capacity building for community leaders in Marietta.
- Take an active role in planning efforts concerning Northwest Connectivity Study by GRTA to encourage and promote transit service within Marietta, and in particular, the Powder Springs Street Corridor.



# EVALUATION AND RENEWAL OF THE PROCESS

A working framework of implementation is established based on priorities, commitment, and availability of funds. Flexibility is important in implementation. Just as a company must be able to adapt to the changing global economy, a community must work to update and reevaluate existing plans and strategies for their effectiveness. Accordingly, as new plans are adopted, a continuous evaluation process must be included as part of the process.

Marietta is at a key point in this process – it is time to begin to shift gears from planning for the future to figuring how the future plans are going to be implemented today.

